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TITLE OF THESIS/*TITRE DE LA THÈSE* "AGRARIAN MYTH IS A MODE:" THE STRATEGIES OF A FARM MOVEMENT AND ITS RELATION TO THE FAMILY FARM MODE OF PRODUCTION

UNIVERSITY/*UNIVERSITÉ* ALBERTA, EDMONTON

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/ *GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE* M. A.

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/*ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE GRADE* APRIL/1975.

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"AGRARIAN MYTH IS A MODE:"
THE STRATEGIES OF A FARM MOVEMENT AND ITS RELATION TO THE FAMILY FARM MODE OF PRODUCTION

by

NATALIE SHARPE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1975

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "AGRARIAN MYTH IS A MODE:" THE STRATEGIES OF A FARM MOVEMENT AND ITS RELATION TO THE FAMILY FARM MODE OF PRODUCTION submitted by NATALIE SHARPE in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of ARTS

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Arthur K. Davis

Date October 29, 1974

To the memory of my dear father

E. Paul Sharpe

(1915 - 1975)

ABSTRACT

Agrarian protest has been a dominant feature of the rural social and economic scene in Canada since the late nineteenth century. The movement has persisted under various forms and names. Presently there are four hundred agricultural organizations in Canada. However, the only true spokesman for farmers (not agriculture) is the National Farmers Union of Canada. It is the only direct farm membership group in Canada and represents ten percent of Canadian family farmers.

Discussion of the family farm in North American society is generally limited to rural-urban migration studies which emphasize the process of modernization. These studies are misleading because they isolate the subject from its historical context. Urbanization also means rural depopulation and the decimation of political and economic power in the countryside. Despite the mass exodus to the cities, the family farm way of life persists to this date. Psychosocial explanations generally account for this phenomenom. Even the terms, 'cultural lag' and 'backlog of traditions' have been used to explain this so-called anachronism.

The contention of this thesis is that 'agrarian myth' or 'agrarian fundamentalism' can be explained through a thorough re-examination of the family farm mode of production. The kind of social response is thought to be linked to the methods and relations of the family or domestic unit of production within the wider social and economic setting. The strategy of the farm movement can only be understood within this kind of framework. Otherwise, the implications of its intent are either totally neglected or misrepresented. The farmer's perspective is not 'hogwash'. It reflects an earnest attempt to analyse his particular situation, and in this sense, demands proper treatment as social history.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the research period, I attended two consecutive National Conventions of the National Farmers Union in Winnipeg (1972 and 1973) where I established my major contacts and derived a large source of materials. I wish to thank the Region Seven Office in Edmonton for the use of their reading materials (including bills and submissions to the government.) I also established rapport with the Boycott Kraft Group in Edmonton. The National Farmers Union monthly paper, Union Farmer, provided information on the movement's actions across Canada, discussed Union policies, and related the experiences and reactions of individual Union members. I am particularly indebted to Mr. Ted Pitman of Colinton, Alberta, president of an Athabasca local, for his cheerful and invaluable correspondence.

I would also like to express gratitude to my advisor, Dr. David Bai, and committee members, Dr. Arthur K. Davis and Dr. Michael Asch.

I am hopeful that the materials presented will benefit and encourage the members of the National Farmers Union in their endeavours.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Anthropologists have to a large extent ignored a socio-economic mode of existence quite distinct from the common mode of production in North American society. The major objective of the thesis is to examine the family farm mode of production in order to assess the aims of its social corollary, the farm movement. 'Mode of production' is an ideal construct that designates the economic and social interrelations of the production unit within the greater society. If these two aspects of production are artificially separated for analysis, the essential aspects of a particular kind of production process are entirely misconstrued. The family farm mode of production suggests that the essential aspects of the social and economic nature of family farming are inextricably linked, and must be described in this manner in order to contrast it with other modes of production in agriculture and other sectors of the economy. The thesis will attempt to demonstrate that the family farm mode of production may be categorized as the domestic mode of production. (Refer to Sahlins:1972.)

The thesis must also account for the family

farm mode of production as it appears in historical reality. It is always inscribed in a social setting. The family farm mode occurs in the Canadian nation-state. The nation-state can be viewed as a socio-economic formation incorporating several overlapping modes of production which are always in a process of change. Although these modes co-exist, there remains an element of antagonism. The economy determines the dominance of a certain mode over other modes or the incorporation of one mode by another mode of production. It is within this framework that the thesis must determine and forecast the interaction of the family farm with the other mode(s) of production. It is the contention of this thesis that the family farm mode of production differs from the dominant mode and that its problems for survival are expressed in its attempts to adapt to the society at large, without the dissolution of its parts, and incorporation into the dominant or capitalist mode of production. These attempts are expressed in the historical response known as agrarian protest or populism. The historical period will deal with the development of the domestic mode in the Canadian nation-state through colonization schemes which reconstituted individual domestic

units across the country which resulted in the consequent development of rural communities. The domestic mode will be described as a family consumption unit geared for production for use-value. It will be discussed in terms of its subservient role in the development of the dominant capitalist mode of production, and its protection of the nation-state during such crises as war. The perils of the mode during the monopoly capital era will be outlined for this is the period of the greatest decline of rural communities and the removal of political and economic power from the countryside.

Another objective of the thesis is to not confuse the farmers movement as a millenarian movement. The former movement is present in state societies whereas the latter is characteristic of pre-state societies. (Refer to Hobsbawm: 1971b.)

The final objective of the thesis is to re-define the concept of populism based on this analytical framework. The farmers movement will be discussed as a form of social protest that is characteristic of a certain mode of existence.

Theoretical Orientation

The level of social organization directly

affects the orientation of the thesis. In a primitive economy at the pre-state level, a general ecological approach of adaptive strategy might seem to be effective in defining and analyzing the strategic features of that society; that is to say, ecological and techno-economic factors appear to have a direct and important role in the formation of the group's socio-economic institutions.* However, at higher levels of social organization such as the state, economic factors and the socio-political arrangements associated with these, appear to be of greater significance. There tends to be an inversion of these factors at the level of nation-state. (Refer to Kaplan, Manners:1972:91.)

> "Distinctive national strategies develop in a nation principally in response to politically stimulated factors in the habitat rather than to natural elements as in stateless societies....Values and ideologies are among the important tools in the different substrategies in a national society and this is an important aspect of its complexity." (Cohen: 1972:19)

The theoretical orientation in this study is anthropological economics, representative of the substantivist school.

---

*Bennett attempts to analyze Canadian farmers in this vain. (Bennett:1969)

> "'Economy' becomes a category of culture rather than behavior, in a class with politics or religion rather than rationality or prudence: not the need-serving activities of individuals, but the material life process of society." (Sahlins:1972:xii)

The resurgence of substantivism in anthropology at the modern state level may well reveal that what may be ideology at home (formalist economics) is bourgeois ethnocentricism. (ibid:xiv) This bias is well-expressed in the dichotomy of peasant versus farmer.

Peasant versus Farmer Debate

Wolf makes a major distinction between peasants and farmers. The peasant is distinguished by the following characteristics:

1) limited involvement in the market
2) traditional land-labor arrangements
3) production for sale only for maintaining subsistence

> "The major aim of the peasant is subsistence and social status gained within a narrow range of social relationships...." (Wolf:1969:xv) The peasant "...does not operate an enterprise in the economic sense; he runs a household, not a business concern." (Wolf:1966:2)

The farmer contrasts in this respect:

1) full involvement in the market
2) land-labor subjected to open competition

3) production for profit (Wolf:1969:xv)

> The farmer runs "...primarily a business enterprise, combining factors of production purchased in a market to obtain a profit by selling advantageously in a products market." (Wolf:1966:2)

Wolf suggests that the change-over from peasant to farmer "...involves a major shift in the institutional context within which men make their choices." (Wolf:1969:xv) Peasant revolt may be a result of a substitution of the peasant's accustomed institutional context, the domestic mode, by the capitalist mode (in the case of imperialism.) The impending institutions are too restrictive on his livelihood; hence, increasing his risk. This has always been the case for the North American agrarian. The thesis contends that Wolf's dichotomy is misleading. The farmer's protest is based on the restrictive and chaotic existence of the farmer in the institutions of capitalism, particularly the market. The movement has always referred to this in the rhetoric of monopoly control. A family farmer can never sell advantageously in a products market unless he integrates production with processing and distribution which is the case of the capitalist farmer. The family farm runs a household. The capitalist farmer runs a business concern. The peasant-farmer dichotomy does not hold true for the family farm.

Farm Studies: Occupational-Normative Approach

As government and social scientists predict the demise of the family farm, salvage anthropology is immanent. The new breed of anthropologists recommend assimilative policies which, in effect, hasten the decline of family farms. (Goldschmidt:1947, Vogt: 1955, Bennett:1969)

Vogt's psycho-social study in a farming area suggested that the farmer's value orientation was functional at one point in time but dysfunctional in the face of market changes. The farmer was suffering from 'hyperexis' or 'excessive response' from an orientation to 'living in the future', gambling, and alternating working and loafing periods. These values "...did not take cognizance of the ecological and economic situations..." (Vogt:1955:17, 186) Values are the residues of older orders. The farmer was suffering from a 'backlog of traditions'; and in this case, 'tradition can be a bad thing.'

Abell and Tyler's analyses are consistent with Vogt. The farmer, as a separate occupational class, is defined through norms and value orientation, that is to say, similarity in occupation, training, problems, life style and statistical identification. (Abell:1970, Tyler:1970:235)

Leacock warns against these kinds of Parsonian

analyses: the structure of occupational roles within the system of industrial society is deduced from variables removed from historical reality. These variables may well reveal in the social setting, the orientation of capitalistic enterprise to profit and the theory of exploitation. (Leacock:1972:59-60) Hence, the farmer's value orientation may well reveal the exploitative nature of the system to which he must adapt his mode of existence.

Adaptive Strategy Approach

At present, Bennett has the most comprehensive anthropological study on modern Canadian farmers. He defines the farm family as:

> "...an entrepreneurial unit supplying its own labor and management out of its nuclear kin, supplemented by other relatives and neighbours." (Bennett:1969:227)

Bennett's method of analysis is 'adaptive' strategy, that is, "...how they manipulate the environment for purposes of survival and also of change." (ibid:19) He places a heavy weight on techno-environmental factors, and includes external agencies or extensions of the state as another strategy. He thus concludes that Jasper society and economy are largely under the control of moisture gradients: "...the available moisture

determines his fortune." (ibid:45) Although Bennett devotes an entire chapter to the role of external agencies, he fails to adapt farming to its basic ecological niche, the modern capitalist state. He confuses farming as a capitalistic enterprise based on:

> "...a) private property, or private ownership of the means of production (land, water, tools, machines); and b) private entrepreneurship, or the operation of the individual farming enterprise as a capitalist venture for the owners...." (ibid:279)*

Bennett confuses the external system with the mode of production. Hence, he refers to ranching and farming as two ecological postures rather than two differing modes of production. He reduces his study to an adaptive strategy of bourgeois economics: "Not all farms are bad investments especially in an era when government provides all...." (ibid:241) But the

---

* Farmers "...are expected to conduct their operations as if they were small private companies, relying upon on their own acumen and skill in order to make a living and a profit....this mode of operation is conceived as taking place within the context of a free market economy in which prices and costs are expected to find desirable levels in the normal process of competition. The individual operators thus are ideally expected to compete indirectly with one another for rewards by producing more and better farm products for sale to the market. In classical economic terms, their economic relationships 'with each other' are viewed not as part of this market system, but as local, personalized phenomena of interest, perhaps, only to the rural sociologist or anthropologist making community studies." (ibid:279)

farmer has a conservative approach to investment. Bennett suggests this is due to backwardness. (ibid: 122) He also concludes that enlargement of the farm is necessary. Small farms have a higher risk factor because there are less resources to manipulate. He adds that more land allows accumulation of more machinery, more capital and more profits. (ibid:124, 125)

> "...it is simply that farming must be conducted by the implicit rules established by the climate and the national economy and that means efficiency of operation and enlargement of the land area..."(ibid:241)

One cannot be surprised at Bennett's postcript; he congratulates himself with his policy recommendation to the Canadian government, the establishment of a large-scale agri-business enterprise (an automated cattle feeding enterprise), Jasper's "...initial example of industrial agriculture." (ibid:332) This will supposedly help the Jasper people to expand and diversify the economy. Bennett's assimilative policy arises from a confusion of the mode of production in which the family farm is involved. Also, the accumulation of more land will not change the exploitative relationship in which the family farm mode of production is socially inscribed. It appears that Bennett readily accepts the domination of the agri-business sector in the

rural community.

Class-Relational Approach

The notion of social class should imply a larger system of stratification. The nature of this stratification and the components of the other classes should be discussed. (McCrorie:1970:323) Wolf suggests that the use of class should imply the mediation of groups between:

> "...the peasant and the larger society of which he forms a part...[It]...is necessary to deal with the realities of power in the focus of peasant involvement in the political society at large....[Classes are]...quite real clusters of people whose development or decline is predicated on particular historical circumstances, and who act together or against each other in pursuit of particular interests prompted by these circumstances...." (Wolf:1969:xii)

The farmer has been also studied as a social class in his relation to the production process.

The Farmer as Petit-Bourgeois

Macpherson's model of the farmer as 'petit-bourgeois' has been widely accepted. (Davis:1971: 22f.n., MacDonald:1973, McCrorie:1971:41, Naylor: 1972:7, Sinclair:1973) Consequently, Canadian farm movements have been described as 'petit-

bourgeois agrarian radicalism.' (Sinclair:1973)

The farmer is 'petit-bourgeois' as a result of his ambivalent status acquired through his double relation to the market:

> "1) he is independent to direct his own labor, and is free of direct dependence on the other's labor; that is, he has 'access to the means of labor' - he owns the land
> 2) he is dependent on an economy otherwise directed, and of which he remains subordinate; the market determines his price and demands an increase in capital and productivity...." (Macpherson:1953:220)

The farmer is always indebted to his 'own' land because he must borrow capital. This is the first internal contradiction. He is competing with his own group; however, as both have a common disadvantage in their relations to the market, their mutual antagonism is reduced. The farmer also cannot sell the product directly to the consumer. As the farmer has no rights to bargain for his commodities, the agri-business sector of processing and distribution, determines the 'buying' and 'selling' price, and accrues a profit. But Macpherson states:

> "...the fundamental source of the farmer's subordination is not the confinement of a restricted market system, but more so his inability to dispose of substantial quantities of labor while operating in an economy in which economic power is based on that ability." (ibid:222)

The farmer's livelihood is antagonistic in that it "...comes neither from employing labor nor from selling the disposal of their labor." (ibid:225) The 'petit-bourgeois' are frequently in conflict; united 'petit-bourgeois' action is the exception, not the rule. (ibid:226) "Hence, the history of petit-bourgeois political thought and action has been a history of oscillation and confusion." (ibid:226,227) Macpherson states that farm movements have always confused class motives with occupation. Further on, he suggests that: "...paradoxically, their mistaken consciousness is necessary to their survival as a group in the present economic order." (ibid:229)

Confusion of the Concept of Farmer as Petit-Bourgeois

Worsley warns against the use of the spurious category, 'petit-bourgeois' as "...one of the spongiest catchalls in the Marxist vocabulary...." (Worsley:1969b:224) There is a 'spectre of class differentiation' in any developing small producer agrarian economy. (Worsley:1969a:235) North American agrarians "...were not simple 'petit-bourgeois' individualists, as their life history demonstrates." (ibid:224) Although family units were autonomous, communities were marked by common origins. New associations could be built around

pre-existing cultural ties such as religion, language and techniques. Also, farmers were quite habituated to state action. (ibid:225,226)

> "...the social situation...generated attitudes which the mere examination of 'class composition' or 'size of holding' tells us nothing about...." (ibid:226)

A mode of production based on subsistence needs and oriented to the family unit of production would be established during the frontier era. This mode was not necessarily a capitalist mode. Clearly, the term 'petit-bourgeois' which implies the capitalist mode, would be misleading if this was the case.

The concept of 'petit-bourgeois' must be re-examined in the context of the Canadian farmer. It appears that the confusion arises when the social and historical setting is obscured in the analysis. It is necessary therefore to reconstruct the social paradigm to clarify the theoretical constructs.

The family farm is socially inscribed in the language of capitalist ideology. Hence, the farmer must employ capitalist terminology to explain the maintenance of the family farm. He is 'trying to run a business' and 'make a profit.' However, the capitalist rhetoric of 'agriculture' does not define the mode of production.

Similarly, social scientists who are inscribed in a capitalist social setting, may easily interpret the farmer simultaneously as capitalist and wage-laborer. Like the farmer, they will define the mode of operation in the language of their environment. Some Marxist scholars seem to succumb to the rhetoric of capitalist ideology when evaluating the agrarian movement as 'petit-bourgeois.' Marx clearly outlines the problem inherent in these analyses.

> [It 'appears' that the farmer,] "... independent peasant or handicraftsman is cut up into two persons. As owner of the means of production, he is capitalist; as laborer he is his own wage-laborer." (Marx:1969b:408)
> "It is only through his ownership of these that he takes possession of his own surplus-labor, and thus bears to himself as wage-laborer the relation of being his own capitalist." (ibid:409)

However, the concept was basically designed for a capitalist mode of production in which the owner of the means of production is not the laborer. Therefore, one cannot transpose this on another mode of production. To say that the family farmer is a capitalist is to say that he exploits his labor and appropriates his surplus. In this sense, the concept is carried to the point of absurdity. The farmer is his own exploiter. This does not adequately explain the

farmer in his contemporary social setting.

Marx, furthermore, defines the farmer as separate from productive or capitalist labor and unproductive or services labor.

> "...they are producers of commodities.... In that capacity they confront me as sellers of commodities, not as sellers of labor, and this relation therefore has nothing to do with the exchange of capital for labor; therefore, also, it has nothing to do with the distinction between productive and unproductive labor, which depends entirely on whether the labor is exchanged for money or for money as money for capital. They therefore belong neither to the category of productive nor, of unproductive laborers, although they are producers of commodities. But their production does not fall under the capitalist mode of production." [emphasis:mine] (ibid:407)
>
> "It is possible that these producers, working with their own means of production, not only reproduce their labor-power but create surplus-value, while their position enables them to appropriate for themselves their own surplus-labor or a part of it (since a part of it is taken away from them in the form of taxes, etc.) And here again we come up against a peculiarity that is characteristic of a society in which one definite mode of production predominates, even though not all productive relations have subordinated to it...." (ibid:408)

Marx feels that the problem lies within a categorical determinateness of capitalist production. It is "...assumed even where the relation is in contradiction with it - hence, the confusion with the mode

of thought and material existence." (ibid:408) One may assume that the social character of production (ownership of the means) expresses the particular kind of production relation because it is the dominant mode in that society.

> "They are therefore not capital, any more than in relation to them, he is a wage-laborer....The means of production become capital only in so far as they have become separated from laborer and confront labor as an independent power...."(ibid:408)

Hence, the farmer does not fall into the category of 'petit-bourgeois.' The term should be limited to designate those employed in 'unproductive' or services labor within the capitalist mode of production itself. The term is much too general and is misleading in that it does not separate those involved in services labor from independent commodity producers (such as farmers) who have been defined by Marx as separate from the capitalist mode.

Also, the term carried a spectre of 'economic determinateness' which totally ignores the social character of production. It emphasizes the 'economics of production' rather than the 'socio-economic relations of production.' The 'economics of production' in a modern capitalist state is a concept employed by bourgeois economists. Economics

is equated with profitability. 'Petit-bourgeois' analyses of Canadian farm movements employ a formalist viewpoint of economics, that is to say, an adaptive strategy for maximization of profits. At the same time, they attempt to derive a Marxist conclusion, which it may be suggested, should be more compatible with a substantivist position that emphasizes the social and economic relations of production. However, since the framework is formalist, their conclusions can only be formalist.

Furthermore, they compound their error by using a Marxist category, 'petit-bourgeois', in an entirely inappropriate manner. It appears then that they do not distinguish between a formalist or substantivist approach to their study. The failure to recognize this basic distinction has resulted in the misrepresentation of the social character of Canadian farm movements and their basic component, the family farm. Therefore, it can be suggested that a model which investigates the family farm mode of production would embrace the socio-economic relations of production. In this manner, the social character of production would not be ignored.

Rural Property Relations

It is within the context of the social and economic nature of production that the work of Arthur Stinchcombe deserves attention. Stinchcombe has set up a classificatory scheme of rural enterprises based on 'property relations.'* He suggests that certain types of rural enterprises occur in cogenial economic, technical and political environments, and that typical patterns of rural class relations will reflect the type of rural enterprise predominant in that society. (Stinchcombe:1966:183)

The rural type, the family small holding, typifies the family farm by the following features:

a) it generally requires two or less workers

b) it historically arises out of

i) family tenancy systems (by land reform or revolution)

ii) through government colonization of farmlands**

iii) occurs at an advanced stage of industrialization

c) enterprise determined by

i) fixed costs of production

---

*The property relations are merely an expression of the nature of the relations of production in themselves. (Refer to Nicolaus:1972:323.)

**In this case, large landlords do not have predominant political power; there are no feudal lords.

ii) family labor

iii) all land is utilized (especially if owned)

iv) income varies directly with market price of commodity and natural disasters

d) features of the political movement

i) maintenance of the price of agricultural commodities

ii) opposition to creditors

iii) opposition to urban interests; no real opposition between rural upper and lower classes

iv) nationalist sentiments.

(Stinchcombe:1966:187)

Stinchcombe's model is useful for organizing information on the nature of the family farm's social and economic relations of production.

Comparative Studies on Agrarian Movements

In order to demonstrate the basic contention of this thesis, it will be necessary to study the general charcateristics of agrarian protest. The major source of comparative studies on farm movements has been termed 'populist.' The term has been used to analyze the events of such movements; it describes the common elements of these movements, despite their particular social and historical context. The majority of populist studies are associated with two groups:

the Narodniks (peasants) of Russia and the farmers of North America, particularly the United States. The populist category eliminates the peasant-farmer dichotomy. Populism can be defined as:

> "...the supremacy of the will of the people and the notion of direct relations between people and government...[it is a]...recurrent part of the communist, anarchist, socialist and democratic traditions alone.... it is an aspect of a variety of political cultures and structures... and is generally used under these terms...." (Worsley:1969a:245-246)
> [Populism is used to describe]"... the encounter between a small rural-producer social order and superior power of large-scale (usually capitalist) industry and commerce.... it may have ...left or right wing forms...." (ibid:241)

Populism does not designate class differences. It does not represent a movement of poor peasants against rich peasants. Populist movements have been led largely by the more successful farmers and peasants.

> [Its] "...typological status is solely an analytical one; not self-conscious awareness of shared traditions as stateless societies or various types of unilinear descent groups...." (ibid:218)
> [The movements have] "...very different features, separate in time, space and culture...[but do however]...possess crucial attributes which justify our subsuming them consciously under the same rubric 'populist', despite variations in their other characteristics...." (ibid:219)

Populism is identifiable by the following elements:

1) it is hostile to any large social agencies that are inimical to the farmer in his role as an independent commodity producer

2) it is displayed by an intellectual and moral diffused hostility to interference with the competitive and 'fair' market system on the part of monopolies (and in this case, large multi-national corporations or agri-businesses)*

3) it places a major emphasis on monetary remedies; producers want to receive a 'fair' or 'just' price

4) it does not plan to overthrow the state; rather it calls for state action in the form of nationalization of various industries, transportation facilities, the banks, and so on

5) its primary social base is among independent rural producers who are on the periphery of social and economic power

6) it extends its ideology to the laborers of the city and hence, seeks alliances with these groups

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*a 'fair' price implies the folk concept of the 'just' price, oriented to use-value.

7) its form and content is largely determined by its situational context.*

> "The danger of creating a spurious category of populist movement is avoided if one recognizes that populist nationalism is not uniform....it may be merely a crucial phase in the struggle phase in the struggle for national independence. That independence having being achieved, consciousness of marginality to centres of economic power declines and means of integrating the newly independent society, other than populist mobilization, are attempted. This pattern is particularly typical of anti-colonial movements where the aim is above all the withdrawal of the metropolitan power.... in a second type, populistic nationalism characterizes regimes rather than movements. In the context of imperialism in the contemporary world,...[the]...native bourgeoisie seek to replace foreign by domestic control and development of the economy and by the same process...increase their power vis-a-vis other groups in the society...[by importing the ideology of populist nationalism]....once political goals are attained... [the native bourgeoisie]...dissociates itself and focuses on other spheres, usually economic...." (ibid:188)**

These particular elements of agrarian response will be re-examined following an investigation into the family farm mode of production. It can be suggested that the nature of the mode of production

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*this is a modification of Worsley's characteristics. (Worsley:1969a:220)

**in the Canadian context, agrarian demands were supported until the initial stage of the National Policy was complete (Refer to Fowke:1946, 1957); note also the similarities between populism nationalism and Macpherson's 'petit-bourgeois' action. (Macpherson:1953:226,227)

can explain:

1) the 'paradox' of the populist movement*

2) the appearance of the populist movement in contrasting social and historical settings.

This includes the final task of the thesis: a re-definition of the concept of populism as a social response that characterizes the socio-economic relations of a particular mode of production. The social and economic nature of family farm production are inextricably linked. Agrarian myth is supplemented by the mode; and to the farmer, the two are indistinguishable.

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*Refer to McCrorie (1971) and the conclusion of the thesis, Chapter 5.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE FAMILY FARM

It is necessary to discuss the historical origins and development of the family farm with a brief summary of the Canadian political economy. The study is concentrated on the era of settlement, noted as mercantile, which will explain the conditions of Canadian agricultural settlement patterns. This age was marked by a large rural population. The subsequent period of time, designated as the era of monopoly capitalism, marks the decline of the farming population. The difficulties of the family farm adapting to this era, are discussed in contrast to the former settlement period. The nature of agrarian protest is accounted for in the context of these two eras.

Mercantile era

Canadian economy and society can attribute its characteristic development to the dominance of mercantile-financial capital over industrial capital. (Macpherson:1973, Naylor:1972, Teeple:1972)*

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*Industrial capital operates in the realm of production while mercantile capital operates in the sphere of distribution.

Because the land colonization companies were mercantile, their major concern was a speculative land sale rather than agricultural production. (Naylor:1972:22) Agrarian development was functional to the dominance of mercantile capital and impediment of local industrial capital. Early farm movements were opposed to the banks, railways, and grain companies - all extensions of the mercantile class, controlled in the Eastern centres of Canada.

> "The grain elevator companies were Eastern-based and tightly cartelized; by 1900, three-quarters of the elevators in western Canada were owned by five companies." (ibid:22)

Mercantile wealth was developed through a trade and communication system rather than in the sphere of production. The production sector was left relatively untouched. The homestead policy indicates the manner in which the mercantile system operated. The grid survey system ignored the natural features of the land, rendering much of it useless. The availability of free land was confined to a very short period of time. When it was finally initiated in 1901, the majority of the best tracts of land had been taken over by colonization companies, railways, and the Hudson's Bay Company.

The family mode as a demographic unit was fostered by the division of lands into family-size units. The division into townships and quarter-sections effectively dispersed family subsistence units across the frontier.

Fowke outlines the historical setting of agrarian settlement:

> "Profitable, commercial activities, rather than agricultural prospects attracted settlements in Canada. Agriculture...was not indigenous to Canada; it was established and expanded only under conditions of extreme and prolonged difficulty...domestic agriculture was considered essential to the profitable and safe conduct of those activities which were of prime economic interest.... government assistance has been typically extended to agriculture because of what agriculture was expected to do for other dominant economic interests in return for assistance, rather than for what such assistance might do for agriculture.... agricultural organizations...and pressure groups have generally been powerless to secure assistance which would benefit them at the expense of other substantial groups within the community. Canadian tariff history offers the clearest proof of this fact.... agricultural policy has been designed to encourage uneconomic uses of the factors of production ...."(Fowke:1946:272)

Mercantile policy was part and parcel of the National policy. During this era, the development of

transportation facilities was facilitated through immigration and settlement, and maintained through the commercialization of agricultural produce.

> "Canadian agricultural policy can be only understood by reference to the conception of the functions of agriculture which prevailed during particular historical times and in particular places....the underlying uniformity is that agriculture in the New World has held essential to the erection and maintenance of empires, whether territorial, economic or ecclesiastical. Imperial interests were centred in France and England, and so far as territorial ambitions were concerned, these were the significant groups. Branches of the old groups became new commercial houses. For territorial empires, agriculture has been considered essential as an instrument of defence, providing arm-bearers, transport and provisions. The economic interests in agriculture, on the other hand, related first to the universal need for cheap, abundant and readily available provisions for New World commerce; later to the profitable character of the wheat trade, and of the investment processes associated with immigration and the expansion of agricultural settlement." (ibid:273)

Agrarian political strength survived the war years, 1914 to 1918, and 1939 to 1945, but quickly diminished during the post-war years.

The capitalist mode of production was impeded by a dominant mercantile class.

> "The point is, as Marx argued, that 'wherever merchant's capital still predominates we find backward conditions.' These conditions include low growth in population, conservative social and political traditions, and indeed, many of those characteristics of a past era which industrialism throws to the winds...'the independent and predominant development of capital as merchant's capital, is tantamount to the non-subjection of production to capital, and hence to capital developing on the basis of an alien social mode of production which is also independent of it. The independent development of merchant's capital, therefore, stands in inverse proportion to the general economic development of society.' In other words, as long as merchant's capital is dominant and enters into the capitalist mode of production only in a limited way, industrial development stagnates. A merchant class can be 'an obstacle to a real capitalist mode of production'...." (Naylor:1972:60)

However, alternative modes of production such as the domestic mode, did survive the perils of mercantile domination.

Mercantile interests extend beyond nationalist sentiments. Due to their heavy reliance on foreign capital,

> "...the Macdonald tariff produced industry in Canada but no Canadian industry....it was not intended to produce Canadian firms. It was a mercantile rather than an

> industrial protective tariff, designed explicitly to augment the quantity of productive factors available to the economy by attracting foreign capital. To the merchant capitalist ruling class, the nationality of the industrial sector was irrelevant: what counted was its size and its location in central Canada." (ibid:25)

The strongest Canadian industries surviving this era were the family farms.

Era of Monopoly Capitalism

After the second world war, the American corporation extended direct investment into Canada, and British finance capital declined. Capital was now invested into the development of local industries in Canada, including the agricultural sector. It is in this era that agri-business appears.* The transition from mercantilism to monopoly capitalism will be recapitulated in order to demonstrate the manner in which agri-business effectively dominates the farmer's way of life to the benefit of the conglomerate.

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*Agri-business is "...the application of industrial proceedings to agricultural production where all credit arrangements and management remain outside the farm, in other words, vertical integration." (Davis, Goldberg:1957:12)

> "Mercantile empires are premised on exclusivist sources of primary staples with markets regulated by the imperial government;.... the colonial surplus is appropriated through the act of exchange itself by the imposition of adverse terms of trade... [for example, tariff].... But direct investment empires are founded on the take-over of the actual production process, and they grow on their own volition by reinvestment of alienated hinterland surplus." (Naylor:1972:31)

The extension of the American corporate sector into agriculture is what Bronson calls the 'continentalism' of agriculture. (Bronson: 1972:122)

> "The rise of branch plant industrialism has led to the secular stagnation of rural areas, a tendency greatly enhanced by rapid resource depletion policies fostered by tax give-aways and by the rise of American corporate farming leading to bankruptcy of the family farm." (ibid:32)

The National Farmers Union deep concern over foreign control of farm lands led to a fruitless investigation through the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. (ibid:122) Agrarian protest in this era attacks the agri-business sector and the government for its compliance with the latter, which is disguised as the 'rationalization' of agriculture. This was documented in a Task

Force Report on Agriculture in 1969.*

Agri-business is part of a conglomeration of corporate powers. Because it often extends beyond the national economy, it can effectively control prices, and dominate the farmer's way of life to its own benefit.**

During the 1950's, the new lenders in production credit were mainly sales finance companies and agri-business enterprises such as feed companies, food processors, and farm machine manufacturers. They only provided credit for their particular product.

> "Moreover, with farmers thus forced to turn to these new supplier sources, there can be little doubt that the vertical integration of farms with processors and supplies was stimulated...." (Carr:1966:56)

Credit is usually extended in the means of a contract.

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*The Report suggested an 'increased mobility out of agriculture or a reduction of family farms; refer to Goals for Agriculture:iii(b) on p. 34 of this thesis; the Report recognized that farmers and agri-business have similar interests; however, it neglects that these interests are in conflict, and as well does not document the exploitative nature of these conflicts in its Proposal for Government Co-ordination on p. 35.

**Note the interlocking control of conglomerate interests during the monopoly capital era and its international scope in the chart Agri-business and Interlocking Control on p. 37; refer back to Remnants of the Mercantile Era on p. 36 and note the same kind of interlocking control.

The contract farmer no longer runs a household concern, for the companies specify the conditions of production and marketing of his products. The farmer, in effect, becomes a contract laborer.

The rapid demise of the family farm has been during the era classified as monopoly capitalism. The political and economic setting of the Canadian nation-state suggests that the exploitative nature of farming is more complex than the 'effects of modernization and urbanization processes' on agriculture. Herein lies the significance of the historical and situational context to the study.

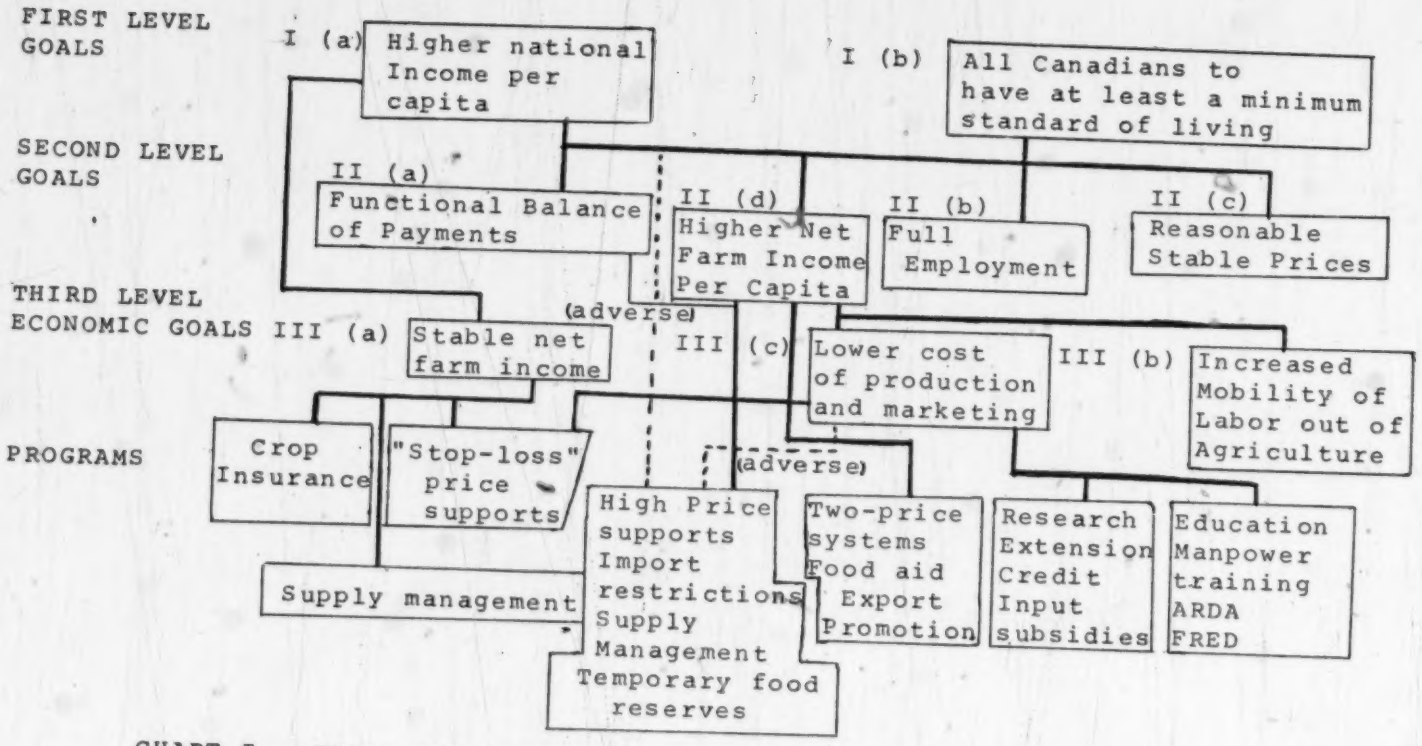

FIRST LEVEL GOALS
I (a) Higher national Income per capita
I (b) All Canadians to have at least a minimum standard of living
SECOND LEVEL GOALS
II (a) Functional Balance of Payments
II (d) Higher Net Farm Income Per Capita
II (b) Full Employment
II (c) Reasonable Stable Prices
THIRD LEVEL ECONOMIC GOALS
III (a) Stable net farm income
(adverse)
III (c) Lower cost of production and marketing
III (b) Increased Mobility of Labor out of Agriculture
PROGRAMS
Crop Insurance
"Stop-loss" price supports
(adverse)
High Price supports Import restrictions Supply Management Temporary food reserves
Two-price systems Food aid Export Promotion
Research Extension Credit Input subsidies
Education Manpower training ARDA FRED
Supply management

CHART I. GOALS FOR AGRICULTURE - GOVERNMENT TASK FORCE REPORT (1969)

(Alberta Department of Agriculture and Unifarm:1970:11)

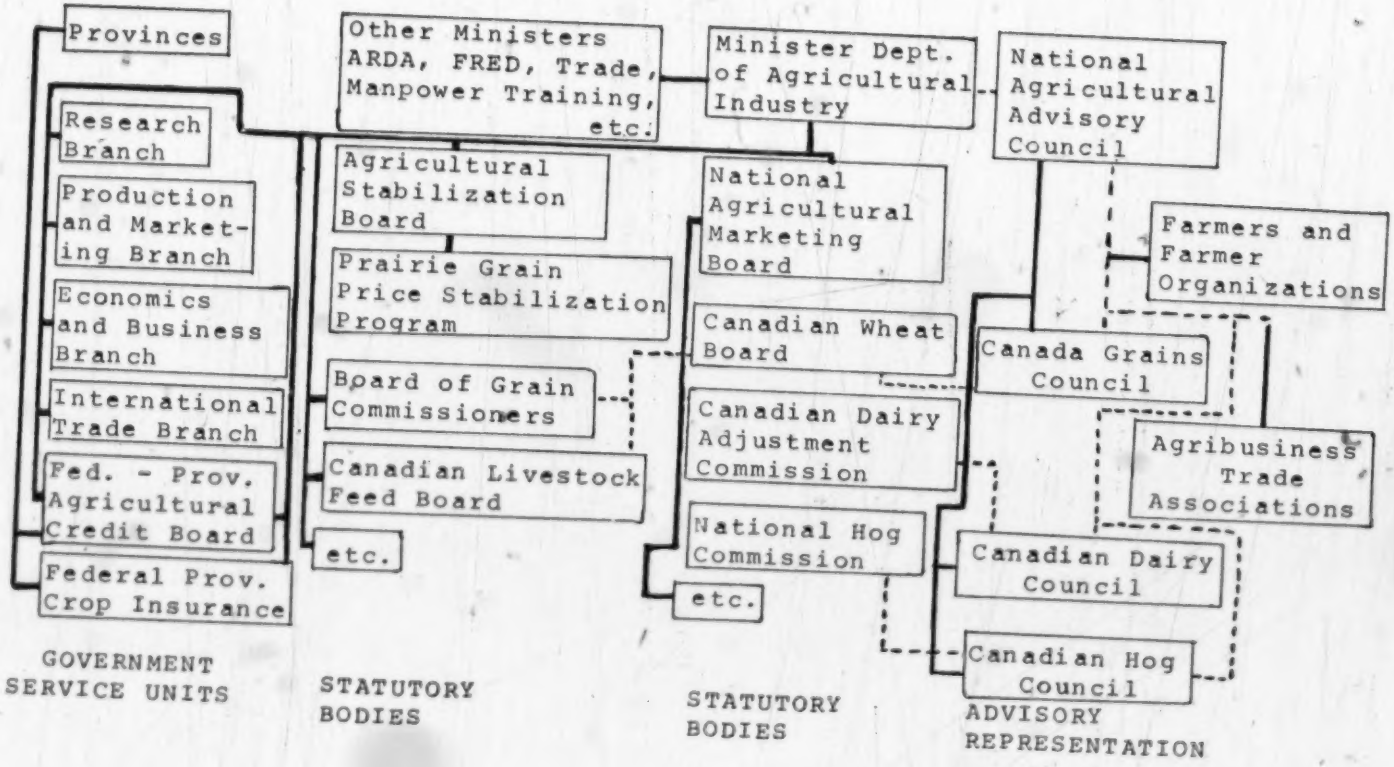


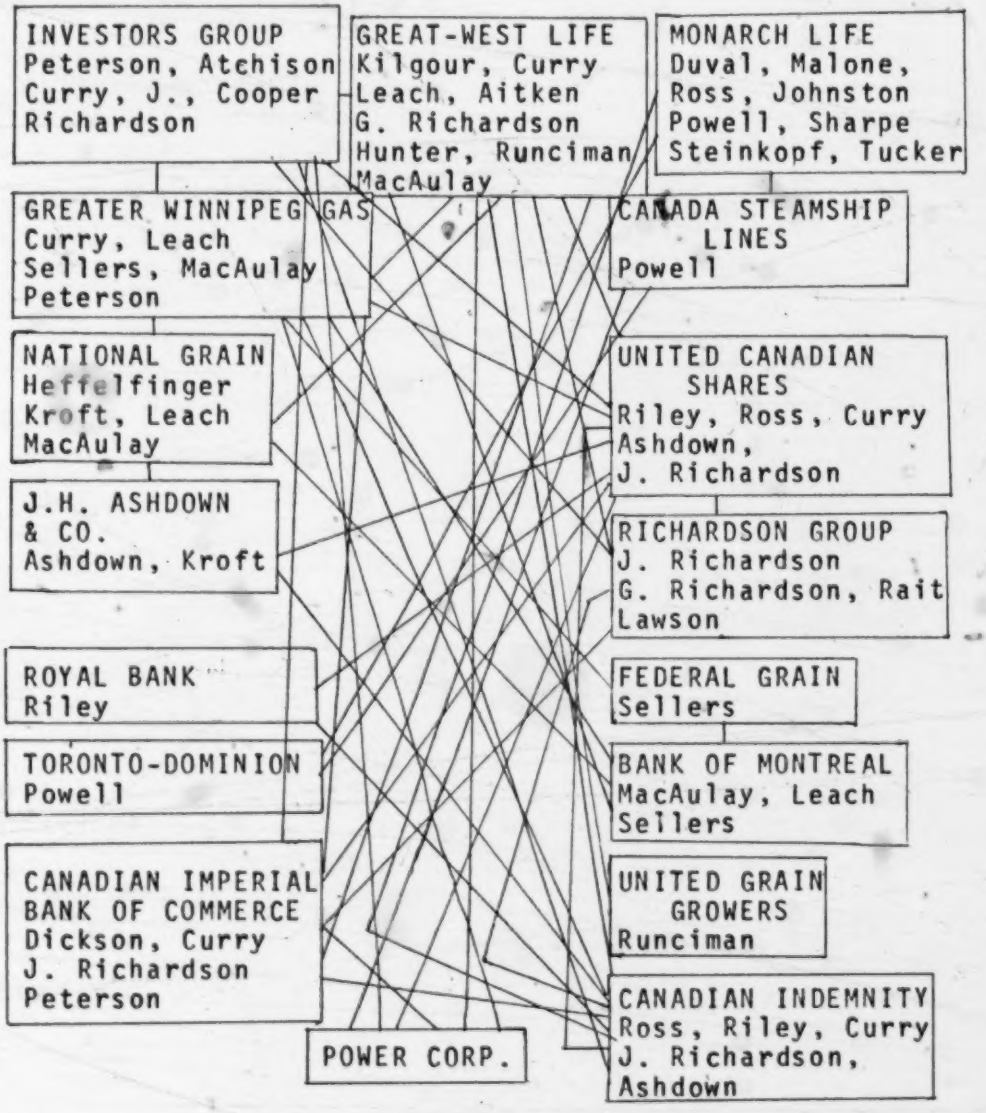
CHART II. PROPOSAL FOR GOVERNMENT CO-ORDINATION

GOVERNMENT TASK FORCE REPORT (1969)

(Alberta Department of Agriculture and Unifarm:1970:48)

CHART III REMNANTS OF THE MERCANTILE ERA

INTERLOCKING DIRECTORSHIPS OF WINNIPEG'S TOP FIFTY



(The Manitoban:1970,#3:n.p.)

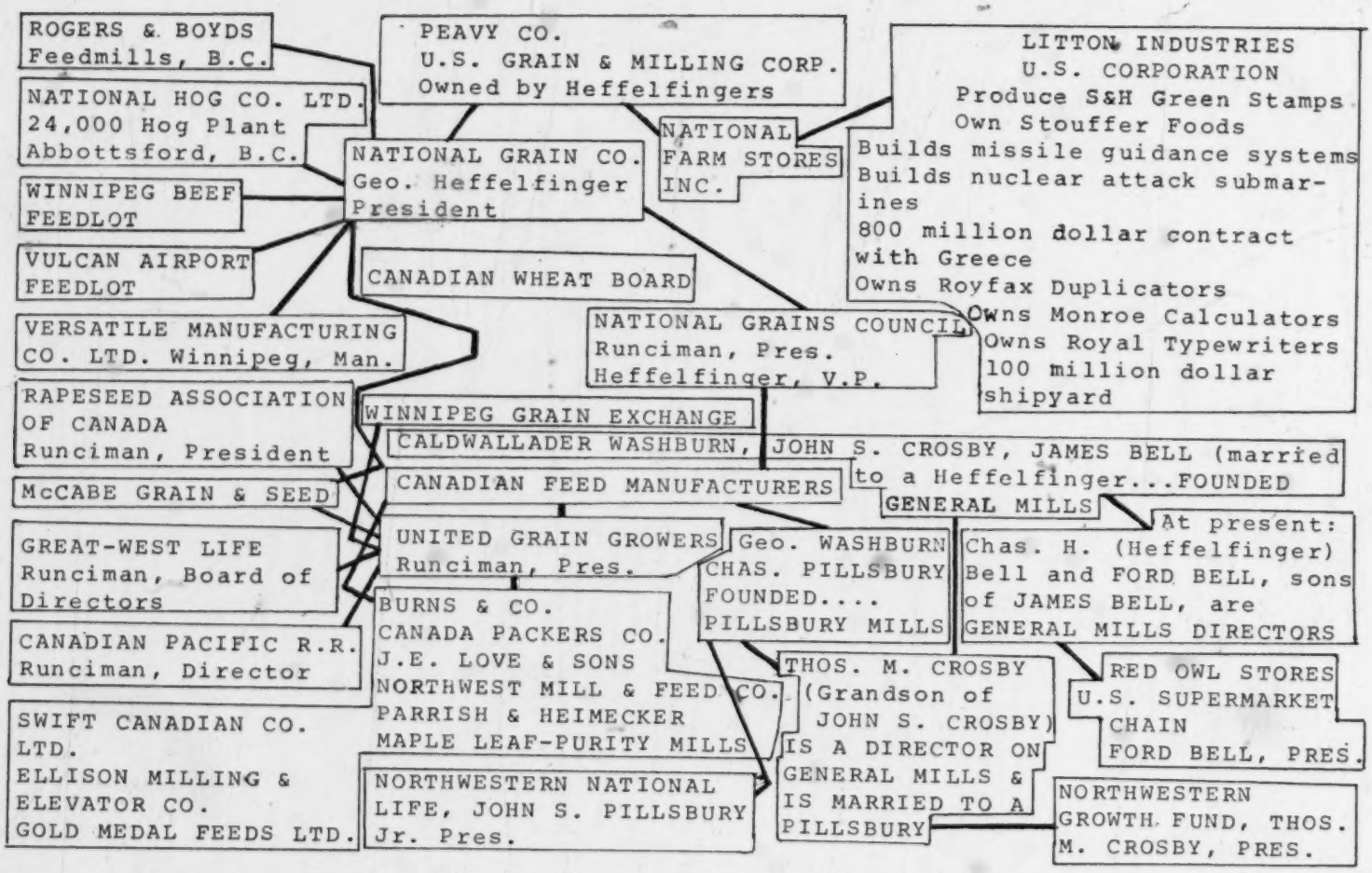


CHART IV. ERA OF MONOPOLY CAPITALISM - AGRI-BUSINESS AND INTERLOCKING CONTROL
(Union Farmer:1970: May:7)

CHAPTER THREE

THE FAMILY FARM MODE OF PRODUCTION

The family farm mode of production will be described as a 'domestic mode' of production. However, Sahlin's model of the domestic mode will be modified in its application to the family farm for the following reasons:

a) the level of social organization differs (the thesis deals with the state and 'modern' economy rather than the pre-state 'primitive' economy)

b) the domestic mode is a subservient mode in this particular economy (rather than the dominant mode as in pre-state society.)

As a result, its characteristics will slightly differ from Sahlin's proposed model.

Sahlin's concept of the 'domestic mode' of production is a reconstruction of Karl Bucher's original construct of the 'independent domestic economy.' Malinowski felt that Bucher's terminology determined "...a condition of domestic autarky, untrue for the producing units of any real society." (Sahlins:1972:83) No household produces all it needs or needs all it produces. Society is based on exchange. However, Sahlins suggests that

Malinowski ignored the more fundamental reasoning for an 'independent domestic economy' and the concept of production for use:

> "Still, it is 'what they need': the exchange, and the production for it, are oriented to livelihood, not to profits....more fundamental than a certain exchange is the 'producer's relation to the productive process.' It is not merely 'production for use' but production for 'use value', even through the acts of exchange, and as opposed to the quest for exchange value." (ibid:83)

Sahlins contends that the domestic mode of production is oriented to 'use-value' as opposed to 'exchange value' of the capitalist mode of production. He clarifies this through economic formula: C→M→C´.*

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*"C→M→C´- simple circulation of commodities: ...the manufacture of commodities (C) for sale in the market in order to obtain wherewithal (M, money) for the purchase of other, specific commodities (C).... [This]...pursuit of use values...[is] ...related always to exchange with an interest in consumption, so to production with an interest in provisioning....the capitalist process...[on the other has] ...an interest in exchange value....The 'general formula for capital' is the transformation of a given money sum into more of the same by way of the commodity: M→C→M´, the engagement of labor-power and physical means for the fabrication of a good whose sale realized the highest possible return on an original capital. Livelihood and gain, 'production for use' and 'production for exchange' pose thus contrasting finalities of production - and, accordingly, contrasting intensities of production." (ibid:83-84)

Sahlins provides a general description of the domestic mode of production.

> "Production is organized by the domestic group,... [and] ...is established on a fragile and vulnerable base...[the family].... The familial labor force is normally small and often sorely beset...." (ibid:74)
> "The household is as such charged with ...the deployment and use of labor-power, with the determination of the economic objective...how labor is expended, the terms and products of its activity, are in the main domestic decisions. And these decisions are taken primarily with a view toward domestic contentment. Production is geared to the family's customary requirements. Production is for the benefit of the producer." (ibid:76-77)

The domestic mode is always inscribed in a social setting. Thus, it is:

> "...always and only in summary of many different modes of domestic production ...generally a family system (nuclear or extended)...internally integrated in different manners and degrees.... [Nevertheless] ...the four variables of this form still hold across these formal variations: ...1) dominance of the sexual division of labor
> 2) segmentary production for use
> 3) autonomous access to productive means
> 4) centrifugal relations between producing units...." (ibid:77)

The domestic mode of production may be organized in diverse social forms, sometimes at the lineage or village community level. This may be represented in the form of cooperative work dependent on

such factors as kinship or local techniques.*

> "...the household is not necessarily ...an exclusive work group...larger working parties are in the main just so many ways the domestic mode of production realizes itself....often the collective organization of work merely disguises by its massiveness its essential social simplicity.... A series of persons or small groups act side by side on parallel and duplicate tasks, or they labor together for the benefit of each participant in turn. The collective effort thus momentarily compresses the segmentary structure of production without changing it permanently or fundamentally. Most decisive, cooperation does not institute a 'sui generis' production structure with its own finality, different from and greater than the livelihood of domestic groups and dominant in the production process of the society. Cooperation remains for the most part a technical fact, without independent social realization on the level of economic control. It does not compromise the autonomy of the household or its economic purpose, the domestic management of labor-power or the prevalence of domestic objectives across the

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*This is probably why Terray concludes that there are two modes of production in 'primitive' economies: the tribal village system of production and the lineage system of production. However, this ignores the basic unit's relationship to these higher corporate structures in which it is socially inscribed. The domestic unit may be antagonistic to the corporate structures of which it remains part. (Refer to Terray:1972:138) It may be noted that Terray's scheme, if applied to a family farm, would designate it as a capitalist mode of production even though its basic unit is antagonistic to the higher capitalistic structures in which it is socially and economically inscribed.

social activities of work." (ibid:77-78)

Principle Aspects of the Domestic Mode of Production in Pre-State Societies

The three essential elements of the domestic mode in primitive economies are:

1) a small labor force based on the sexual division of labor

> "...marriage, among other things, establishes a generalized economic group constituted to produce the local conception of livelihood...."(ibid:79)

2) simple technology or more basically, the primitive relationship between man and tool. It is the relationship, rather than the physical property of the tool, that matters

> "...[The tool]...delivers human energy and skill....efforts of the producer are more decisive than simple equipment.... (ibid:79)

3) finite objectives of production

> "...production for livelihood envisions not only a moderate quota of good things, but those of a 'specific useful character' responding to the producer's customary requirements...[it seeks]...merely to reproduce itself...." (ibid:84)
> "...economic destiny is played out in its relations of production, especially the political pressures that can be mounted on the household economy to create a surplus...[although it is]...intrinsically an anti-surplus system...." (ibid:82)

These three elements of the domestic mode of production keep each other in check. (Refer to Chayonov's rule:ibid:87)

> "Nothing within the structure of production for use pushes it to transcend itself. The entire society is constructed on an obstinate base, therefore on a contradiction, because unless the domestic economy is forced beyond itself, the entire society does not survive....Economically, primitive society is founded on an antisociety...."(ibid:86)
> "Nothing in the organization of production itself provides systematic compensation for its own systematic defects." (ibid:92)

Every domestic unit is a consumption unit; hence, consumption is the conspicuous form of pooling which sets each household apart as a distinct group.

> "The domestic mode of production is a species of anarchy....[it] ...anticipates no social or material relations between households except that they are alike.... the social economy is fragmented into a thousand petty existences, each organized to proceed independently of the others and each dedicated to the home-bred principle of looking out for itself.... Viewed politically, the domestic mode of production is a kind of natural state. Nothing within this infra-structure of production obliges the several household groups to enter into compact and cede each one some part of its autonomy...." (ibid:95)

The basic contradiction of the domestic mode of production is the impediment of the development of the productive means of the domestic group; as a result, there is a maximum dispersion of homesteads.

> "...maximum dispersion is the absence of interdependence and a common authority, and...is by and large the way production is organized...." (ibid:97)

However, there are greater social forces beyond the domestic mode which overcome its economic defects. In pre-state societies with 'primitive' economies, these forces are the kinship units; in state societies, the state itself is the inhibiting factor.

Property and its Relation to the Domestic Mode of Production

> "On the contrary, rather than producing for others, a certain autonomy in the realm of property strengthens each household's devotion to its own interests." (ibid:92)

Sahlins suggests that the coexisting tenures are "...typically superposed to the family rather than interposed between the family and its means of production." (ibid:92) The right to use the land, rather than to own it, is necessary for domestic production. In most pre-state societies, domestic units do not own the land; instead, they have usufruct. "Expropriation, if it occurs, is accidental to the mode of production itself." (ibid:92) Expropriation is due to an external cause; it is not a systematic condition of the domestic mode of production. In a primitive society, expropriation is usually due to warfare. However, in bourgeois society, expropriation is incidental to the mode which dominates that society, the capitalist mode of production.

Sahlins has made a valuable contribution to economic anthropology by seeking out the smallest identifiable social and economic unit in primitive economies, the domestic unit, and analyzing its relation to the production process in these societies. If the domestic mode is the dominant mode, it is geared to use-value, and the basic economy of that society will operate on the level of subsistence maintenance. The society is then considered to be underproductive, inefficient, backward, and striving to survive, from the traditional formalist viewpoint in economic anthropology. In other words, 'cultural lag' may well be the material base of that society, the domestic mode, asserting itself.

> "...even when the traditional economy is broken and harnessed to the market, during colonial confrontation, it... [the domestic mode of production]... insists to assert itself even afterwards." (ibid:86)

Sahlins does not discuss the domestic mode of production beyond pre-state societies. In the state society, the domestic mode often becomes the subservient mode of production, especially when it is replaced by the so-called 'modern' economy. In peasant societies, the domestic mode becomes a subservient mode and must succumb to the demands and

pressures of the capitalist mode of imperialism.

The major issue of this thesis is the persistence of the domestic mode at the level of nation-state.

Modification of the Domestic Mode of Production at the Level of Nation-State

The assumption in this thesis is that at the level of nation-state, there exists a dominant and co-dominant modes of production. In the Canadian nation-state, the capitalist mode is the dominant mode. The co-dominant modes are subject to the imposing and dominant mode of production, for they must adapt to the national economy which typifies the dominant mode. These modes are subordinated to or appropriated by the capitalist mode of production.

> "Since bourgeois society is only a form resulting from the development of antagonistic elements, some relations belonging to earlier forms of society are frequently to be found in a crippled state or as a travesty of their former self...." (Marx:1973:39-40)

The two subservient modes of production identifiable in a capitalist state are the domestic mode, as indicated by occupation - the 'independent commodity producer' - and the concomitant mode of capitalism, the household mode of production, as designated by sex - the 'housewife'. (Refer to

Rowbotham:1973.) The former predates the capitalist mode while the latter is a creation of the capitalist mode. Neither can be classified as capitalist mode for they do not represent 'productive' and 'unproductive' labor, as defined by the capitalist mode of production. (See Gough:1972.) It also follows that if the capitalist system is overthrown, its dominant mode, the capitalist mode, and its concomitant mode, the household mode, would be eradicated; however, the domestic mode which predates the dominant mode has a strong chance of survival because its bases are founded on other than the capitalist mode.

The major features of the domestic mode at the level of nation-state are as follows:

1) there is still a small labor force usually based on the sexual division of labor

2) the primitive tool relationship remains unaltered despite the complex nature of its physical properties. The laborer still makes the decisions on how to apply the tool. However, it may be argued that the capitalist state largely determines the technology and to some extent the laborer's relationship to the tools of production. The relationship may be modified by the requirements

of the state

3) the domestic mode is forced to produce a surplus for the system which dominates it; the state determines how much the domestic unit should produce. The domestic mode appears to be a capitalist mode because it is forced to produce infinitely. This is the strongest antagonistic element for it places the domestic mode in a constant battle with the larger institutions of society based on the principles of the dominant capitalist mode. However, the domestic mode of production is always forced beyond itself even in primitive economies. The domestic mode is crippled by its position as a subservient mode of production. However, it continues to assert itself; given its obstinate base, its chances for survival are limitless.

The family farm as a domestic mode of production

Although the dominant mode of production in Canada is the capitalist mode, the predominant group of farmers representing the 'family farm' do not fall into this category. This is not to say that capitalist forms of agricultural enterprises do not exist: ranches, corporate farms, contract farming, and other commodity production combined with processing and/or distributing, are

representative forms of capitalist agriculture. Because the Canadian government defends the state, its definition for a farm unit assumes the rhetoric of capitalist ideology. Statistics Canada defines the 'census-farm' as "...an agricultural holding of one acre or more with sales of agricultural products during the preceding 12 months of $50 or more." (1971 Census of Agriculture) Given this definition, there were a total number of 366,128 farms in Canada in 1971. The farm population was 1,489,565 or approximately five percent of the total Canadian population. (21,568,311)

Private individuals		336,175
Partnerships		21,019
Institution or Community pastures		776
Incorporated business:		
family		7,081
other		166
Residence:	9-12 months	325,974
	5-8	8,923
	1-4	5,275
	0	40,154
Owners		251,066
Tenants		19,200
Part-owner,Part-tenant		95,862 *

*All statistics were obtained from the Advance Bulletin of the 1971 Census of Canada: Statistics Canada.

These statistics suggest that the majority of farmers have a private individual type of organization, reside on the farm most of the year, and either own the land or own and rent land.

The first element which identifies the family farm as a domestic mode is the family as the identifiable unit of labor. Labor is based on sexual division; however, given the overproductive nature of the family farm in the Canadian setting, the woman's work load may be extended into those labors traditionally reserved for the man. Nonetheless, the domestic unit still makes the ultimate decisions and must bear the risk of these decisions. The primitive tool relationship remains although the state bears a determinate weight on technology. The state has methods for making production more efficient; yet, the farmer must, to some extent, decide which aspects of the state's technology he will employ. He may be seen as 'struggling for survival', and at the same time, be called 'inefficient', although his labor hours have increased over the years. The third element, finite objectives, is missing from the family farm, at least in appearance. The state requires a surplus, and the farmer requires a surplus in order to create more surplus; consequently, he is overworked.

In contrast, the domestic mode in a primitive economy is characterized by an underuse of labor power.

The familial labor force is often sorely beset because it is so small (usually husband and wife.) (Sahlins:1972:74) The physical complexity of the tools, however, enables the small labor force to produce the level of surplus to be appropriated by the processing and distributing sectors of agriculture.

The extent to which neighbouring family farms cooperate is in terms of community work, each benefitting the other in turn. Each household remains autonomous; hence, cooperation is basically a factor of local techniques. The cooperative community work never crosscuts the domestic management of the household.

Production is oriented to use-value. The farmer's cry for a 'just' or 'fair' price is based on this notion.

One might conjecture: how did a 'primitive' mode of production arise in a state in which the capitalist mode predominated from the beginning? As mentioned in Chapter Two, wherever mercantile capital dominates, we find backward conditions, and an inability for the capitalist mode to develop.

The hinterland was underdeveloped and marked by a lack of a strong central government because of the external orientation of mercantile capital. A domestic mode could readily develop during this era. The frontier and homestead policy allowed for a maximum dispersion of homesteads. Also, the transportable items culture of 'way of living' characteristic to the immigrants, allowed them to easily adapt earlier forms of production, particularly a domestic mode.*

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*England, an early writer on the colonization of Western Canada, noted this peculiarity of the family farm mode of production. "Over a big portion of the West, there are centuries-old modes and ways of life sanctioned by tradition and convention that cannot be evaluated by any business barometer, statistician's curve, or by over-simplified economic doctrine. Net worth and return for labor are useful criteria, but the implication that monetary and commercial phenomena are foundational rather than superstructural, is not valid. The early primary economy to which many settlers still adhere can do without money, markets and standards and still survive. This is an important and often overlooked fact. Too little consideration in economic analysis has been given to the motivation of varied economic and social enterprise. Pioneer economy was based on biological needs of food, shelter and clothing...." (England:1936:302) England appears to be saying that pioneer economy was oriented to production for use-value rather than production for exchange-value or profit.

Use-Value Categorization of Family Farm Tenure

The formula of use-value will be used to describe the basic forms of family farm tenure.

1) Owner C→M→C′*

The owner sells commodities in order to maintain his right to produce on the land. The money he receives is then used to purchase commodities for domestic consumption and materials for purposes of production. However, given the Canadian context, the 'parasites' of his labors are the agri-business sectors which extract the 'profits' through costs

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*"The circuit C→M→C′ may be divided into the movement C→M, the exchange of commodities for money, or 'sale'; the opposite movement M→C, the exchange of money for commodities, or 'purchase'; and the unity of the movements C→M→C′, exchange of commodities for money so as to exchange money for commodities, in other words, 'selling' in order to 'purchase.' The outcome in which the transaction terminates is C→C, ie., exchange of one commodity 'use-value'; for another, actual exchange of matter. With these two separate transactions, however, the possessor of the commodity cannot make a purchase without a sale." (Marx:1970b:87) "...the separation of sale and purchase makes possible not only commerce but also numerous 'pro forma' transactions, before the final exchange of commodities takes place. It thus enables large numbers of parasites to invade the process of production and to take advantage of this separation....money, the universal form of labor in bourgeois society, makes the development of the inherent contradiction possible." (Sahlins:1972: 98)

of processing and distributing goods. The farmer is thus caught in a double bind in trying to exchange his commodities for use-value. He receives monies in the capitalist form of exchange-value, far below the 'just' price because of the extracted profit. He then purchases commodities which have been subjected to the same law of exchange-value and loses again.

2) Owner-Tenant

$$C \rightarrow M \rightarrow C'$$
$$\uparrow$$
$$C$$
$$\uparrow$$
$$M$$

This form arises when the $C \rightarrow M \rightarrow C'$ owner's returns from $C \rightarrow M$ are not adequate to purchase $M \rightarrow C$. The survival of the family farm is threatened. He must try an alternative strategy. In order to continue the original $C \rightarrow M \rightarrow C'$ (his family farm), he rents an adjoining section. He will then contribute the monies from the products of this piece of land to the purchase of commodities for the original productive unit. If he receives a surplus from $M \rightarrow C \rightarrow M'$, he redistributes it into the family farm $C \rightarrow M \rightarrow C'$; his labor on both operations is continuous.

3) Tenant Farmer $M \rightarrow C \rightarrow M$

The farmer pays rent for access to the land for the right to produce.* Commodities enter the element in the labor-process and emerge from it as a product. The commodity re-enters the process of circulation in order to be exchanged again for the right to produce, in the form of rent. In this process of M→C and C→M, there is a double form of exploitation. The capitalist owner can appropriate the surplus rent, M, in order for the farmer to gain access to C. Secondly, his product, the commodity, as transformed through his labors, is reconverted to M again, and is once more appropriated by the agri-business sector. M→C→M "...represents the continuous reproduction of the commodity by the same producer." (Marx:1970b:331)

4) Owner - Part-time wage laborer

C→M→C′
↑
M
↑
C (labor)

This final form is on the rise, especially in the new frontiers such as the Peace River Region. The dominant mode is the domestic or family farm mode.

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*"...[M or rent is the]...transformation of money into commodity and re-transformation of money into commodity....money is transformed into commodities, means of production, and means of subsistence." (ibid:310)

The laborer lives on the farm. His part-time wage labor constitutes a method for adapting the capitalist mode to the survival of the domestic mode. Here, in a subjective sense, the capitalist mode is subservient to the domestic mode. However, the objective conditions of exploitation have made this adaptive mechanism necessary. The farmer, ironically, labors in order to remain a farmer.

These are the four categories in which the domestic mode of the family farm manifests itself in the tenure structure of farms in Canada today. The family farm enterprise typified in these categories also corresponds with Stinchcombe's description of the 'family small-holding' outlined in Chapter One.

Exchange-Value Categorization of the Capitalist Mode of Agricultural Tenure

The essential aspect of the domestic mode, the family as the production unit, is clearly missing here. The formula representative of this mode is exchange-value: M→C→M

> "[In this form, money] ...instead of representing the relations of commodities ....enters now, so to say, in private relations with itself. It differentiates itself as original value from itself as surplus value...." (Marx:1969a:153)

The capitalist pays the landowner and employs wage labor or is the absentee landowner who accumu-

lates the rent and/or employees wage labor as well.

Another form, the contract farmer, enters into an agreement with a processing or distributing agri-business firm, and in effect, becomes a laborer by losing his decision-making power in the control of production.

The research farmer and the hobby farmer are not oriented to the family unit of production but can claim tax rebates by qualifying as 'census-farm' units.

> "The commodity owner can by his labor, create value, but not self-expanding value...(whereas) ...the capitalist farmer is engaged in agriculture merely as a particular field of exploitation for capital, as investment for his capital in a particular sphere of production." (ibid:153)

Large-scale ranches and any form of vertical integration in agriculture, tied in with distribution and processing (agri-businesses), such as contractual farms, cattle-feeding enterprises, cooperatives, milling structures, and so on, classify as the capitalist mode of production in agriculture. Hence, any example of industrial agriculture, characterized by:

1) an absentee landlord and employing wage labor and/or

2) tied in with the process of distribu-

tion and processing of commodities are oriented to production for exchange-value.

National Farmers Union Categorization of the Family Farm and Other Forms of Agriculture

It is relevant at this point to discuss the National Farmers Union categorization of the family farm, and compare it to the theoretical types given in this chapter. The National Farmers Union has asked the government to re-define the family farm. The Union suggests that government subsidies should be extended to only two forms of agricultural enterprises which it classifies as 'family farms:'

a) family farm operation
b) family farm corporation (the Hutterites, for example.)

These two forms correspond with the four theoretical categories which were previously classified as the domestic mode of production.

The National Farmers Union has likewise categorized other groups to be outlawed from subsidies and tax rebates. These are as follows:

c) corporate farm
d) vertical integration
e) research farm
f) hobby farmer
g) other.

These types correspond as well with the analytic category designated as the capitalist mode of produc-

tion.

The strategy of the National Farmers Union now may be carefully examined in terms of its role for the survival of the family farm.

CHAPTER FOUR

ORGANIZATION AND STRATEGY OF THE NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

The National Farmers Union was chosen as a representative movement to the study rather than the four hundred other agricultural organizations in Canada for several basic reasons:

1) it is a movement for farmers only. The basic unit of membership is the family farm, and there are restrictions on who may join according to this classification

2) it is the only direct membership national organization in Canada. It is neither limited to commodity groups nor provincial ties

3) of all agricultural groups, it is viewed by the society at large, as the most militant in its demands

4) unlike the provincial unions, it is not associated with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. This is an important difference. The government plays a major role in provincial unions; its representatives often dominate the policy-making and administrative level. In this sense, the National Farmers Union is not swayed by government propaganda

5) it sees itself as a movement organized

for farmers, not agriculture

6) it is organized to weed out representation by agri-business or capitalist-oriented agricultural enterprises through its membership

7) it rejects and provides critical analyses of government bills and reports on agriculture through the presentation of briefs and demonstrations

8) it seeks an alliance with urban consumer groups and other labor or minority groups whose positions are threatened at the national and international level

9) it is not affiliated with any political party. The political party seeks control of the state apparatus which is a capitalist one. The Union's objectives which are centred around the survival of the family farm, are endangered through allegiance to a particular political party

10) it provides a clear outline of an analysis of Canadian society from which it has devised a strategy for saving the family farm.

History of the National Farmers Union*

The National Farmers Union appears as the product

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*Refer to Appendix A for historical details. I am also indebted to Peter Twynstra for his brief historical account on the National Farmers Union.

of a long succession of farm movements in Canada. Farm movements form a major part of Canadian history which has been largely neglected by historians.

For almost twenty years, there existed a loosely-knit federation of provincial unions known as the National Farmers Union Council of Canada. The Council rarely voiced itself because of various legal restrictions. There were too many cleavages in the Union that were represented by provincial interests. The Council soon realized the ineffectiveness of such a structure and felt that an attempt to reorganize the farmers on a national scale would be the best method to strengthen an effective structure.

On April 10, 1969, ten thousand farmers took part in the largest rally ever held in Western Canada. The rally was against the agri-business sector which had been taking unlawful advantage of the surplus grain problem. Later that summer, a tractor demonstration was held on the Saskatchewan highways in protest to the government's lack of concern in alleviating some of the farmer's problems.

On July 30/31, 1969, the National Farmers Union held its founding convention. Two thousand farmers participated in the formation of the first direct-membership national farm policy organization in Canada.

In their initial policy statement, the National Farmers Union said:

> "We are learning that the pursuit of individual interest leads inevitably to self-destruction. We are learning that the society in which we live and toil is exploitative in nature and the power of abundance we possess is widely subjected to economic exploitation to our disadvantage." (N.F.U.:1969a:101)

The basic purposes of the movement were outlined:

> "...1) we must, as a nation, overcome the narrow consideration of world economic and political shortcomings in order that food may be used as an effective weapon for the relief of human suffering and establishment of peace....
> ...2) we believe in the maintenance of a strong rural community in Canada as an essential part of our national culture and that farmers must continue to hold a distinct place in the national identity as the basic producers of food.... The primary production of food is the largest of our national industries, still within the realm of Canadian economic and political control. We believe it must be Canadian....
> ...3) Farmers must organize and bargain collectively as farmers to bring about the degree of discipline and organization necessary to make them an effective countervailing force in society....
> ...4) Through mutual cooperation and collective action, farmers can exercise the bargaining power that comes with organization....
> ...5) the rationalization, development and promotion of sound farm policies by farmers upon governments

is essential to the future welfare of farming...." (ibid:10)

Who does National Farmers Union represent?

"1) Our organization claims to represent farmers, not agriculture. We differentiate between farmers and agriculture because agriculture embraces not only basic food production of farmers, but the vested interests of the total agri-business community which often is parasitic in nature because it exploits and profits from the labor and investment of farm people....
2) the current hostility of the economic climate towards the family farm is therefore generated by the fact that the prime forces in trade of farm products are controlled by national and international corporations who control the marketing, distribution and pricing of the vast majority of farm products and which are rapidly encroaching upon the basic production or control of production of farm products. Farmers struggling for economic survival within the confines of provincial organizational jurisdictions labor at a distinct disadvantage in mustering adequate countervailing power to influence the course of their destiny. Because many farm problems are national and international in nature, they are beyond the powers of provincial governments....We believe...[the concept of a national] ...farmer's organization is the only one which can provide farmers with sufficient potential resources to act as an adequate countervailing force in an economic climate hostile to the survival of the family farm as the dominant food producer in Canada." (N.F.U.:Region 7:1970:1)

The National Farmers Union is based on a survival theme. The family farm is viewed as a distinct livelihood and a true representative of Canadian-owned and controlled industry unlike the agri-business sector which is largely dominated by American multi-national corporations. The Union claims that the primary production of food is the largest of Canadian national industries.*

The objectives of the Union do not indicate any major transformation of society. Rather they wish to:

> "...3(a)...promote the betterment of farmers in the attainment of their economic and social goals...[through] ...reduction of costs...education and research projects...[and so on.]" (N.F.U.:1972:1)

The constitutional requirements for membership are as follows:

> "3) membership is based on the family farm unit. Eligibility for membership depends on a) any person, including the spouse or children of that person, residing with him, engaged in farming in Canada b) any retired farmer who has not acquired any other full-time occupation...." (N.F.U.:1969b)

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*In 1969, "...agriculture...in all its phases...affected more than 42% of Canada's G.N.P." (Union Farmer:1969:4)

Organizational Structure of the National Farmers Union*

The organization is divided into four levels: national, regional, district, and local. There are seven regions in Canada excluding the province of Quebec**:

Region 1 - the Maritimes; concentrated mainly in Prince Edward Island and also in New Brunswick

Region 3 - Ontario

Region 5 - Manitoba

Region 6 - Saskatchewan

Region 7 - North and Central Alberta

Region 8 - the Peace River Block of Alberta-British-Columbia.***

These regions are subject to division at any given time. The regions are again sub-divided into districts whose boundaries may be adjusted as well. The 'grass roots' or local level consists of a minimum of fifty family farm units of membership. At present, there are

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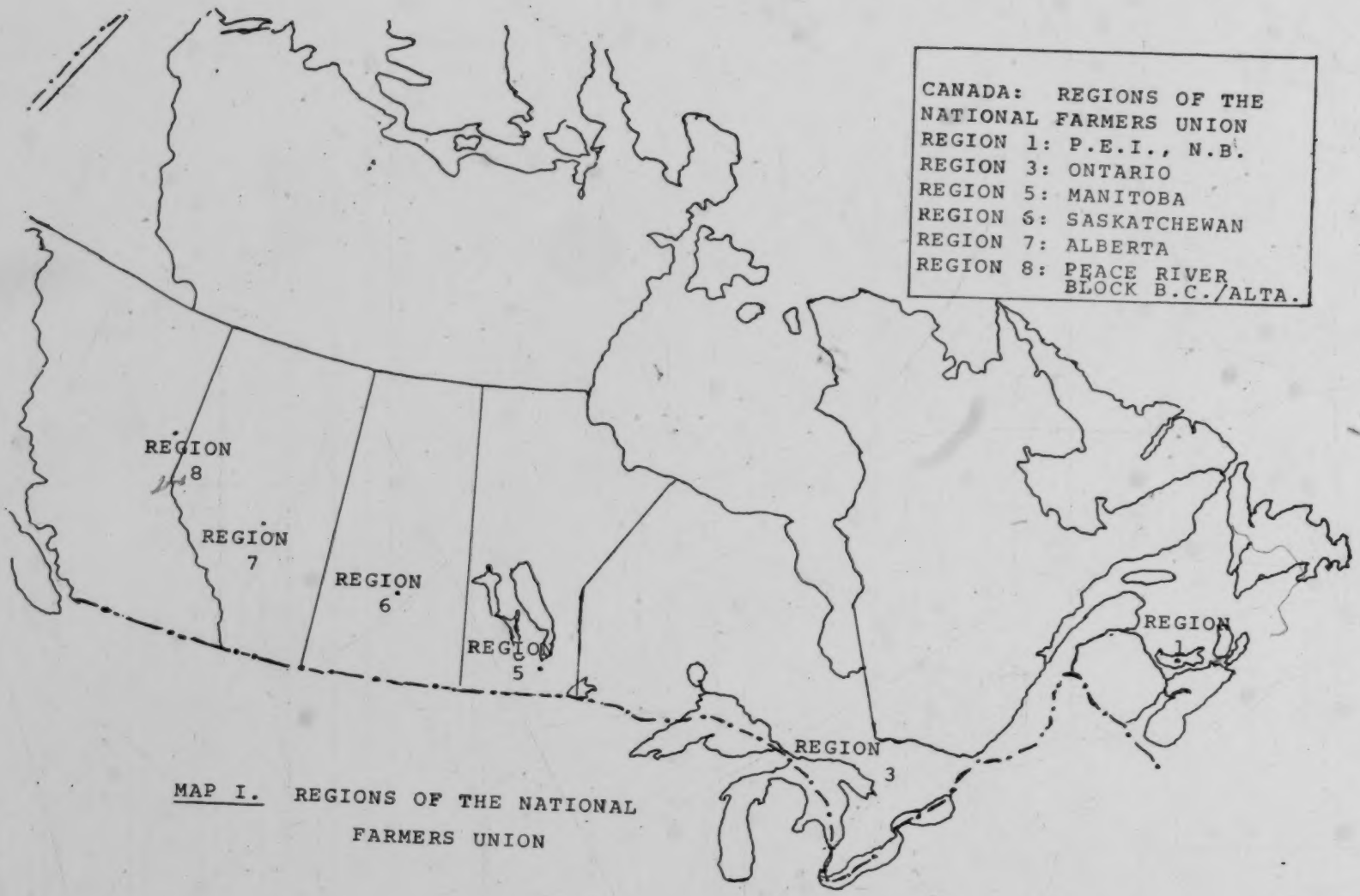
*Refer to Appendix B.

**The province of Quebec has a strong Catholic-affiliated provincial union. A proposal to ally this union with the National Farmers Union was defeated at the National Convention in 1972. The alliance would have strengthened the National Farmers Union's position in Quebec but at the same time it contradicted the Union's principles which state that it has no religious ties.

***The majority of these regions are in the hinterlands of Canada. Transportation facilities are further removed and the area is marked by underdevelopment. Land may be less productive. Farms are generally of the small enterprise type. The regions tend to include strong enclaves of minority ethnic groups.



MAP I. REGIONS OF THE NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

approximately two hundred locals. Membership ranges in the area of thirty thousand or ten percent of Canadian farm units.*

Locals usually meet once a month. They present policy proposals and resolutions to the district which in turn will finally reach the National Convention (and will then be subject to voting by all delegates present.) There are educational workshops on the farmer's role in Canadian history, discussions on the Kraft and other boycotts, and reports on urban and labor alliances. Topics of discussion include practical matters as well: canvassing for membership, taxation issues, deals for fuel and binder twine, and so on.

The primary duty at the local level is canvassing for membership. It is a very selective procedure. Standards are rigid. The family farm unit is the basic qualification for membership, so the local is discouraged to enlist any members outside of this rank. Certain cases which classify under the Canadian census as farm units are eliminated from Union membership. For example, the tenant family rather than the absentee landlord, will qualify for membership. This is an important distinction. It is the 'right to produce'

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*Canadian farm units as defined by Statistics Canada:1971.

rather than 'ownership' of the land which determines whether or not a membership will be sold. Likewise, contractual farmers (those who have contracts with agri-business enterprises) are not considered to be good membership material. As a rule, rural residents who produce the quota for the census farm unit for tax rebates and subsidies but whose occupation is other than what National Farmers Union designates as 'family farm,' will not be canvassed as potential members. Locals may refer to the district or regional levels for any questionable memberships.

The district and regional levels are organized respectively, to deal with commodity problems in their geographical areas, local disasters, provincial jurisdictions, and so on. There are educational workshops and leadership training at these levels as well. The district and regional levels carry out the executive work of the National level.

The National level consists of the Board of Directors and the National Executive. The president is the chief executive officer and an ex-officio member of all committees. There are separate presidencies for the women and juniors (ages fourteen to twenty-five years.) The executive duties are administrative - subject to the rules, policies, and decisions of the Union in National Convention, and the Board of

Directors.

The Board of Directors consists of the National Executive and the directors elected by delegates (one per region.) This is the policy-making body of the Union between conventions. This group interprets the decisions made by the annual convention into active policies.

All elected officers of the Union are selected at the National Convention. There are restrictions on these positions:

> "...[One cannot hold]...an executive position in a cooperative or commodity farm organization from which he receives $500 or more as an annual wage or honorarium...." (N.F.U.:1972b:14)

An officer likewise cannot hold a political position; this is a safeguard against internal corruption. Also no elected officer may hold the same office continuously for more than ten years. This provision encourages 'grass roots' participation and the training of new leaders.

At the National Convention, delegates are sent by all the locals to discuss and vote on policies. The National Board and Executive cannot effect policy without local approval.

National Farmers Union Strategies for the Survival of the Family Farm

Collective Bargaining

The National Farmers Union major strategy for maintenance of the family farm is a modification of the Agricultural Producer's Marketing Act. It is proposed to be the Agricultural Producer's Collective Bargaining and Marketing Act. This would provide a legislative framework for certified collective bargaining for farmers. The vehicle for bargaining would be the National Farmers Union. As a bargaining agent for farmers, it would negotiate collective agreements with government appointed marketing commissions.*

The legislated provisions have changed since the first proposal. Originally, the National Farmers Union proposed to enter into collective agreements directly with the buyers of farm products (such as large multi-national corporations like Kraftco.)

Collective agreement between the government-appointed commissions and the National Farmers Union negotiating committee represented by producers would be 'subject to ratification' by the membership of the Union locals (fifty percent plus one.)

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*collective bargaining for farm outputs only.

The bargaining area would be either the whole or any portion of a province. The Union would devise a marketing plan for the commodity. Once approved by the Lieutenant-in-Council, the plan would be put to a vote. Only producers of the commodity to be regulated (all Union members) could vote. If the plan was approved by a majority, the Union negotiating committee and the marketing commission would make a collective agreement. A service fee would be charged to the producer in case of bargaining failure upon which a witholding action (of the product) would be held. At no time could the Union take physical possession of the commodity nor could it create owned agencies or subsidiaries to do the same.

Questions concerned with the problems of this kind of arrangement have been debated and resolved. For example, what if over fifty percent of the commodity produced in one area is controlled by less than fifty percent of the producers? Will the fifty percent plus one Union members who produce less than fifty percent of the agricultural product as opposed to the supposed five percent farmers who produce sixty percent of the commodity to be bargained, have effect in controlling the price?

The National Farmers Union has outlined criteria

for initiating a programme in a given area:

"1) concentration of production (location)
2) membership strength in the area
3) bargaining potential
4) available resources (people and money)

A potential area will be determined by:
1) number of producers
2) total volume of product
3) number of member producers
4) volume of product held by producers
5) determine who are buyers of the product
6) where the markets are
7) competition in the market
8) determine market requirements"
(N.F.U. Collective Bargaining:1973:4)

These factors will determine whether the Union can bargain effectively. Essentially, collective bargaining would give the farmer "...substantially higher returns from the Market place...[it represents] ...the farmer's struggle to extract fair treatment...." (ibid:4) The Union also suggests that collective bargaining may reduce the number of private enterprise farmers entering into contractual agreements with vertical integrators. (ibid:4)

If the National Farmers Union does not act in faith with its membership, it will lose its position as negotiator because it is always dependent on a membership quota of fifty percent plus one. The family farm representation, therefore, determines and regulates the power of the negotiating committee.

The collective bargaining procedure has been confused as 'bourgeois motives'; in other words, little farmers want to replace the large capitalist farmers in order to become the capitalists themselves.* However, the family farm has been designated as a domestic mode rather than a capitalist mode of production in this thesis. It can be then suggested that collective bargaining does not express the essence of the mode of production; instead, it is an adaptive mechanism to a capitalist economy. It does not alter the family farm mode of production.

Land Use Policy

The National Farmers Union is in the process of formulating a land use policy. Presently, there is no intensive land policy (at the federal level) aimed at retaining land for agricultural purposes.

> "[Some local and provincial programmes] ...do subscribe public monies to the purchase of farm land. These farms or lands are then leased at a nominal fee, often with an option to purchase over a five to ten year period.... Criteria as to who may occupy the

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*"All that my friend Roy Atkinson,.. is trying to do by organizing a National Farmers Union, is to give farmers an effective trade association such as most other categories of capitalistic entrepreneurs have long enjoyed. A more conservative truly capitalistic goal could hardly be imagined." (Davis:1971:22 f.n.)

> the land or its end use is usually vague, and provides a minimum of emphasis toward a program of establishing young farmers, or a 'back to the farm movement.' In short, such programmes are generally designed to consolidate and enlarge holdings of present farms with no upper limits to what may already be large landholdings." (N.F.U. Land Policy:1973)

One of the major problems of the family farm is the private ownership of land. Because property is appropriated by the capitalist system, the farmer's concern for private ownership for 'use-value' is always in conflict with the capitalist's 'exchange-value'. The private ownership of land enhances the drive toward the corporate farm and the demise of the family farm. National Farmers Union members in Region 6 submitted a brief to the Saskatchewan government regarding ownership and expropriation:

> "To the farmer, the traditional value judgment rooted in the ownership of farmland has been his belief that security of tenure was part and parcel of private ownership. He has learned that this is a myth. Security through private ownership applies only if some public or corporate interest does not choose to exercise its legal option of expropriation...." (N.F.U.:Region 6:1971)

The trend has been to mortgage the farm and its future. The major method for expansion is rental;

therefore, the number of owner-tenants is on the increase.

Because the average age of farmers is now in the mid-fifties, there should be a large transfer of land in another ten years. The National Farmers Union feels that a policy should be effected to protect this land. The Union is revaluing the principle of ownership requiring such large capital investment in favor of a guaranteed tenure of occupancy.

The land use policy statement that was proposed at the 1973 Convention is now under scrutiny at the local level. Its major objective was the preservation of good farm land. It was decided that the term 'farmer' must be re-defined in order to determine the goals of the policy:

> "WHEREAS the 1971 census defined a farmer as a holding of 1 or more acres with sales of at least $50
>
> THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we direct the executive of the NFU to work with the government to correctly define a farmer, and to abide by the definition."
> (N.F.U. General Resolutions: 1973:15)

A classificatory scheme for farm operators was devised:

> "a) family farm operation
> b) family farm corporation
> c) corporate farm
> d) vertical integration
> e) research
> f) hobby farmers
> g) other
> ...only family farms or family farm corporations be eligible for tax rebates, special incentive or improvement grants, farm subsidies, etcetera....land zoned for agriculture... [should] ...be valued according to its productivity for farming not on sales to individuals, who, in many cases are not living on the farm but have purchased the farm to acquire a home in the country or are holding the land on speculation." (N.F.U. Proposed Land Policy:1973:2)

The Union felt that a federal-provincial land use policy should embody the following principles:

> "1. that no person or corporation other than a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant own or lease more than one acre of land in Canada
> 2. that aliens now owning Canadian land be permitted to retain such ownership but that any transfer of ownership must be to a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant
> 3. that land use policies give priority to family farm ownership
> 4. that no commercial corporation be granted registration to operate a farm enterprise, with the exception of a farm family or cooperative
> 5. that there be upper limits on the amount of land that can be farmed by any individual family farm corporation, depending upon the nature of production, geography, climate and other conditions ...." (ibid:2)

Conditions on the tenure of occupancy were to be referred to the local level for further study.

A land bank scheme was suggested as a method of securing tenure of occupancy. Under such a plan, the government would provide the capital investment of the land and lease it back to the farmer at a rate sufficient to cover the cost of services to the land. Legislation would provide assurance to the farmer that, having met the necessary qualifications, he would have the 'use-right' of the land as long as he wished to farm. It would also be transferable to kin who desired to operate as full-time producers. (Refer to Union Researcher Deverell's comments in Land Bank Program under Discussion in Union Farmer: 1972:8: May/June.)

The land bank scheme under discussion in Region Six would have provisions against speculation:

> "Land sales may have to be channelled through the land bank....Criteria of allocation...[would be] ...negotiated by the N.F.U. on behalf of farmers.... A maximum farm size...defined by value of assets and income...[would ensure] ...a fair distribution of income." (ibid:8)

The limitation of farm size would hinder any attempts to consolidate farms through vertical integration. It appears that the National Farmers Union's strategies for the family farm are constructed on the concept of the 'right to use' the land rather than the 'bourgeois ownership' of the land. (Refer to Sahlins:1972:93.)

The Boycott

The National Farmers Union has launched a re-education programme on the farmer's role in Canadian history. The Union has identified the enemy in the era of monopoly capitalism, as the monopoly conglomerate that extends into the agricultural productive process. The Union literature demonstrates the extension of control at the international level of such monopolies as Kraftco, and also how local governments aid the corporation to the producer and consumer's detriment.*

The Kraft boycott is an outcome of this re-education process. Its original aim was to win collective bargaining rights for the farmer. Its ramifications into the urban areas has effected alliances between urban consumers and rural producers. The boycott literature shows how both sectors are dominated by the same enemy and suggests alternatives to Kraftco products. The boycott has also been successful in eradicating misconceived notions about rural society.

There has been hostile reaction to the boycott and its associated demonstrations as well. Infiltration of the National Farmers Union by

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*Refer to Appendix C for boycott literature.

members associating with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Intelligence Service has been documented. (Brown and Brown:1973:119-122)

The National Farmers Union speaks in terms of a 'fair' or 'just' price; not a profit. It also considers that the 'right to use' the land for a livelihood is more important than the outright 'ownership' of land. The strategies outlined for the survival of the family farm are based on these concepts. It is within this context that the National Farmers Union's role in Canadian society should be interpreted.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
ANALYSIS OF THE FARM MOVEMENT

The farmer has been loosely categorized as 'petit-bourgeois', 'capitalist', and 'entrepreneur'. Consequently, farm movements in Canada have been designated as 'petit-bourgeois agrarian radicalism' by several Marxist-oriented scholars. (Macpherson:1953, McCrorie:1971, Sinclair:1973.) The term 'agrarian socialism' has been used by the ideological counterparts, the bourgeois apologists. (Lipset:1959) Both terms are misleading.

McCrorie views the farmer as a:

> "...special category of the urban industrial working class and the farmers movement as an appendage to a large working class political movement." (McCrorie:1971:37)

The farmer's historical response it complex; it does not correspond to the classical case of the entrepreneur. (ibid:47)

> "Farmers have not attempted to eliminate their competitors in agriculture despite the decrease in the number of families engaged in farming and the tendency towards larger farm units. Moreover, they have retained an individuality at a time when they integrated commodity handling and marketing with production. More important, they have accomplished these ends through the social movement. We may conclude that although the

> leadership seeks to influence the membership through district conventions and local meetings, it is constrained by what it perceives as a custom or tradition among rural peoples - a tradition of individualism, of making up their own minds." (ibid:40-41)

This spirit of individualism is more than an element of tradition; it is an expression of the essence of the basic unit of production and representation, the domestic or family farm unit. It can be further suggested that the farmer's historical response is different and confusing because the mode of production is misidentified. Herein lies the irony that McCrorie finds in the movement.

> "The irony of history is that their efforts and dreams resulted in a remarkable adaptation to a capitalist system, not a changing or overthrowing of that system." (McCrorie:1964:121)

There is no irony if the farmer is not viewed as a capitalist entrepreneur. There is no paradox if the family farm mode of production is designated as a domestic mode. The reason that the farmer was at odds with other capitalists is because his mode of production was subservient to the capitalist mode. Adaptation to the dominant mode was necessary for the survival of the family farm.

McCrorie attempts to seek parallels with the situation of the Narodniks following the October

Revolution. The purpose of the New Economic Policy was to reorientate the peasant to an urban market. However, "...by 1920, it was abundantly clear that the peasant has no such intention...."(McCrorie:1971: 49) McCrorie suggests that the farmers in Canada and the peasants had a similar source of antagonism which differed from laborers:

> "...the process of industrialization and urbanization provides the basis of agrarian unrest, concern and alienation....Capitalism, in the case of Canada, and communism, in the case of Russia, have proven to be vehicles of industrial-ization in these respective countries...."(ibid:51)

Therefore McCrorie sets the context of agrarian movements in the subordination of agriculture to the process of industrialization which is sometimes referred to as 'modernization'. Rather, it can be stated that it is the subordination of the domestic mode of production to the dominant mode - the capitalist mode in the case of Canada, and the communist mode in the case of Russia - that clarifies the context within which agrarian movements must be reinterpreted.

The Concept of Populism Re-defined

The thesis will account for the elements of populism in relation to its primary social unit of

representation. Populism appears where a group represents the subordinate mode of production. The expression of populism will be those elements to which the subordinate mode must cede. Hence, populism can appear in socialist as well as capitalist economies, and take on characteristics of both: at the same time, it does not fight capitalism or communism. The elements of protest arising with the movements (whose function is to aid the survival of the mode represented) are identical; hence, populist. However, social and historical settings differ. It is a necessary condition for the evolution of these movements into the political and economic arena to intervene for the mode's survival. The form of the movements takes on the accomodative aspects of the dominant mode to which it must remains subservient. This accounts for the variance of left and right wing forms.

Social protest designated as populism occurs at the nation-state level. Populist movements do not appear in pre-state societies in which the economy is dominated by the domestic mode. There are several overlapping modes of production in state societies; generally, one mode is dominant and the other modes are subservient. The rise

of populist movements in third world countries suggests (in the context of modern imperialism) the substitution of the capitalist mode of production for the former dominant (usually domestic) mode.

It is the contention of this thesis that populism, as an analytical concept of social movements, represents a response of the subordinate mode(s) to the dominant mode of production, resulting in organized protest. The similarity of the grievances and demands of populist movements widely separated in time and space arises from the similar problems faced by a subservient mode in a state society.

It is within this context that the National Farmers Union can be classified as a populist movement.

Acknowledging the Farmer's Perspective as Social History

The validity of the farmer's perspective has often been ignored and subsumed into the realm of 'agrarian myth'. However "...the farmer must construct theories on the operation of society by experience, and the materials at hand." (Hann: 1973:3) Even his psychological orientation of frugality suggesting a sense of 'use-value' has been disguised as a reflection of cultural institutions such as the church rather than adaptive

values.* "Clearly his objective analysis of society should be analyzed from his situational context." (Hann:1973:3) The farmer's perspective is never considered seriously as social history. (ibid:3)

One of the basic assumptions of this thesis is that the psycho-social phenomena associated with the farmer's viewpoint is linked to his mode of production. The dimensions of the farm movement can only be understood by identifying the characteristics of the family farm mode of production. It has been the contention of this thesis that the family farm represents a domestic mode of production. If it represents a capitalist mode, then it follows that the National Farmers Union has no hope in securing the benefits of its aims and objectives. If on the other hand, the family farm is a domestic mode, then the National Farmers Union's strategies, if effected, will aid its survival. So long as the domestic mode prevails, its chances of surviving beyond a capitalist state, are limitless. It is on this basis that the study concludes that the strategies of the National Farmers Union are truly sophisticated.

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*Bennett refers to this as "Protestant virtues." (Bennett:1969:6)

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APPENDIX A

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

OFFICIAL NATIONAL FARMERS UNION DOCUMENT

1. APRIL 10, 1969

10,000 farmers took part in the largest farm rally ever held in Western Canada. The protest was against the actions of agri-business in taking unlawful advantage of the surplus grain problem. Result: Although provincial governments and agri-business (including its farmer-owned sector) kept pressing for removal of the farmers' protection, the Federal Government moved in the opposite direction. It began to prosecute agencies which were exploiting farmers unlawfully.

2. JULY, 1969

5,000 tractor-mounted farmers, demonstrating on Saskatchewan highways, protested the lack of government action on farm problems.

Support was given by the Saskatchewan Federation of labour, Indian-Metis, students, United Fishermen and Allied Workers and others....
(p. 2) Result: a) Canadians across Canada were made aware of the problems and the protest of Canadian farmers b) Participating farmers were encouraged by the friendly, favorable reaction of a vast majority of the driving public c) Literature handed out by the demonstrators helped many non-farm people get a better understanding of farm problems d) The Prime Minister, after refusing to meet with N.F.U. officials reversed his decision and participated in two private meetings --A first in farm movement history. e) As a result of these meetings, the government revised its policy on grain sales; expanding its credit program and putting more emphasis on an aggressive sales program. The results of this change became evident in increased grain movements.

3. JULY 30 - 31st, 1969

2,000 farmers from across Canada convened in Winnipeg and reconstituted the N.F.U. as a direct-membership national farm policy organization. Result: For the first time in history farmers have an effective answer to the Federal Government's

excuse that it doesn't know who speaks for farmers. Today, only one organization speaks for farmers AND NO ONE ELSE.
(p. 3) 4. AUGUST, 1969

Longshoremen moved only grain (without pay) for a couple of days while they were on strike. Later, the companies prohibited longshoremen from using their equipment to give farmers special consideration while the strike was on.

5. FEBRUARY, 1970

National Farmers Union supported Indian-Metis Organization with a food aid program in Saskatchewan.

6. MARCH, APRIL, 1970

In one week, thousands of prairie farmers participated in three rallies held by the National Farmers Union in the capital cities of the prairie farmers.
Demands of the Rallies:
a) Immediate restoration of feed grains to full Canadian Wheat Board Control b) An end to inter-provincial bootlegging of grains c) Immediate licence suspension for elevator companies and feed mills found guilty of infractions under the Canadian Wheat Board Act d) That there be no check-off authorized for agri-business organizations e) that the government Wheat Acreage Reduction Program (LIFT) be immediately rescinded f) Immediate payment of the $385 million owed by the Federal Government to grain producers g) That the Federal and Provincial Governments make a firm commitment to negotiate with the N.F.U., in a meaningful way, the terms and conditions under which food will be produced in Canada.
Result: Governments and the public learned that the new organization was active, competent and gaining strong support among farmers. (The Alberta government, which had previously refused to meet with N.F.U. officials, did so as a result of the rally.)
(p. 4) 7. APRIL, MAY, 1970

Egg give-aways in Edmonton pointing out to consumers the low egg prices that farmers receive.

8. APRIL, 1970

Fishermen in Mulgrove, Nova Scotia, who were

on strike, were supported by N.F.U. members across the country, especially in the Maritimes. Money was given by some locals and food was donated.

9. JUNE, 1970

National Farmers Union members in Ontario, learning that powdered milk was being imported from Ireland, picketed Borden's. (For years surplus supply has been claimed as an excuse for paying farmers low prices on milk for manufacturing.) When an injunction stopped the picketing, the National Farmers Union launched a boycott of the company's products.
Support was given from union members in various occupations: a) Teamsters (refused to cross N.F.U. picket lines.) b) The Brotherhood of Railway Workers c) Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers d) International Retail, Wholesale and General Workers (held a meeting which resulted in the plant being closed down.)
Result: For the first time in history, Canadian farmers forced an agri-business corporation to sign a legal commitment in which it is required to stop an activity to which the farmers object.

10. SUMMER, 1970

N.F.U. launched a public information campaign on the Federal Government's Task Force on Agriculture. (Not one other farm organization at that time opposed it -- they all welcomed it.)

11. JULY, 1970

N.F.U. gave support for striking postal workers (press release and telegram.)
(p. 5)
12. AUGUST, 1970

N.F.U. started signing fescue contracts in Peace River. During the summer a holding action was organized to begin with the harvest.
N.F.U. members threw a picket line around Can West Seed House (U.G.G.) in Edmonton. Out of this:
a) Some drivers did not cross picket lines b) A railway engineer refused to spot cars to haul fescue c) Weiler-Williams (a commissioned stockyard) refused to cross the picket line to get screenings,

which resulted in the plant being closed.
Result: News of holding stiffened the market. Prices offered at harvest time were double those of the previous year.

13. AUGUST, 1970

Manitoba farm women and youth picketed stores with employees from Weston's Bakery, when the George Weston Company began importing American bread in a strike-breaking move. Literature was handed out and distributed in Winnipeg by both farm and labor people. Result: a) The strike and the importation of bread were both terminated. b) The effectiveness of farm women and youth in militant action was demonstrated. c) Farm and labor people learned how they can reinforce each other's actions.

14. NOVEMBER, 1970

Regional meeting in Saskatchewan passed a resolution condemning the War Measures Act.

15. DECEMBER, 1970

From the Convention: a) Resolution denouncing Dow Chemicals and supporting the efforts of the United Farm Workers of California. (p. 6) b) Resolution directing the N.F.U. to establish its own Task Force on Agriculture. (Result - Grain Hearings launched as first step.)

16. JANUARY, 1971

Feed Grain Picket in Region # 8. Six members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union from Taylor Refinery picketed with farmers for five days. O.C.A.W.U. also supplied coffee twice a day for these five days.

17. MARCH, 1971

N.F.U. members opposed the Public Order Act by demonstrating in Charlottetown. Supported by students and part of the labor movement.

18. APRIL, 1971

Hogs to the union and distribution of information in: a) Saskatoon (12 grocery stores pamphleted.) b) Prince Albert (the P.A. Labor Council donated their building for the day.) c) Regina

(25 stores pamphleted)... d) Edmonton (28 stores...) e) Winnipeg (29 stores...) there was a final distribution of food...given to needy people...[in Winnipeg. Alliances were established with the churches and the Bakery and Confectionary Workers there.]

19. APRIL, 1971

Food give-aways and the distribution of information in Ontario in these and other places: Renfrew, Brockville, Cornwall, Goderich, Brantford, Chatham, Newmarket, Kingston, Hanover, London, Belleville and Hocksbury. Massive support was given by labor councils, church organizations and poor people's groups.
Results of #18 and 19: a) The public were made aware of the spread in pricing from the farm level to the supermarket level. (p. 7) b) The public became aware of present government policies and corporate policies that are destroying the family farm way of life.

20. JUNE, 1971

600 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers in Winnipeg were threatened to be laid off. N.F.U. members in Manitoba (with a few tractors) marched to the legislature with the unionists to present their demands.

21. JUNE, 1971

Roy Atkinson and Evelyn Potter leave for a thirty day tour of the People's Republic of China.

22. JULY, 1971

Ingersoll Picketing (100 N.F.U. members); resulted in an immediate increase in the price of industrial milk.
Demonstration (1000 N.F.U. members); farmers were not willing to settle for a price increase -- wanted stability (pricing system was changed from a yearly basis to a monthly basis.)

23. JULY, 1971

Youth Exchange Program and Seminar. 24 young people from across Canada met, exchanged views, and listened to the views expounded by Michelle Chartrant,

(CNTU), Homer Stephens (UFAW) and Ernie McWilliams of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange.

24. AUGUST, 1971

The government of Prince Edward Island, along with the Federal Government had started a "development plan" for Island agriculture. The plan is based on the Task Force Report -- designed to remove most of the farmers from the land on Prince Edward Island and replace them with industrial corporate farms. (p. 8) N.F.U. Members on Prince Edward Island launched tractor demonstrations, which resulted in a confrontation with the government. Result: The "development plan" for the Island has been discredited and shown to be unacceptable to the people....

25. AUGUST, 1971

Kraft Boycott launched to win Collective Bargaining rights

26. NOVEMBER, 1971

Over 500 N.F.U. members distributed over 70,000 leaflets in eight western centres (65 supermarkets) ...urging consumers not to buy Kraft. Result: a) Consumers were made aware of the issue and many stopped buying Kraft. b) Massive support given the N.F.U. by labor groups, church organizations, student bodies, consumer groups and many others....

27. DECEMBER, 1971

N.F.U. Convention addressed by Jessica Govea (United Farm Workers) and Homer Stephens (President. United Fishermen and Allied Workers.)

28. WINTER, 1972

China slides taken by Roy Atkinson and Evelyn Potter shown throughout Canada.
Grain hearings held throughout Canada as a first step in the development of a Farmers' Task Force on Agriculture.*

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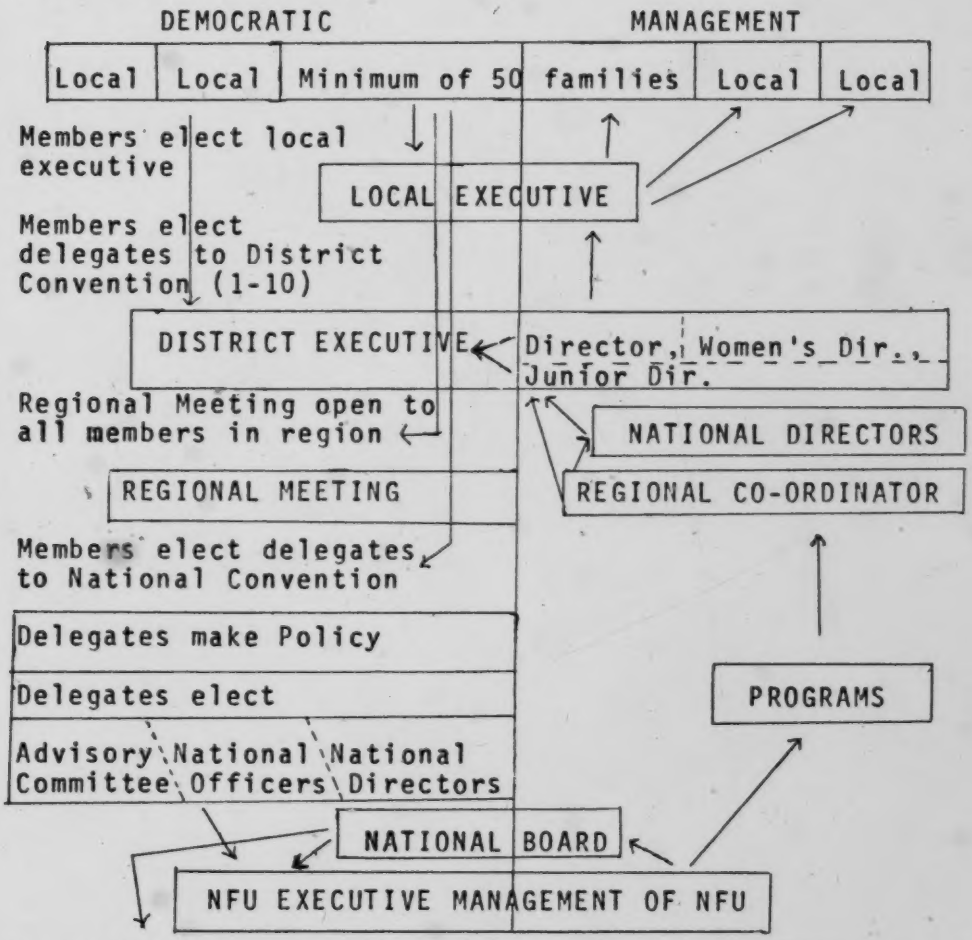
*This Union document covers three years activities from the formation of the National Farmers Union up to Spring, 1972.

APPENDIX B

PRINCIPLES INCORPORATED IN CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL FARMERS UNION

Membership - open to all Canadian families engaged in farming in Canada.



1. Divide Canada into Regions and Districts.
2. Interpret policy and determine priorities.
3. Lay down guidelines for regional development, finance, organization.

1. Develop programs to implement policy.
2. Appoint a Director in each Region as Regional Co-ordinator.
3. Appoint Senior staff members.
4. Keep Membership records.
5. Issue Membership cards.
6. Publish Paper.

(N.F.U. Document)

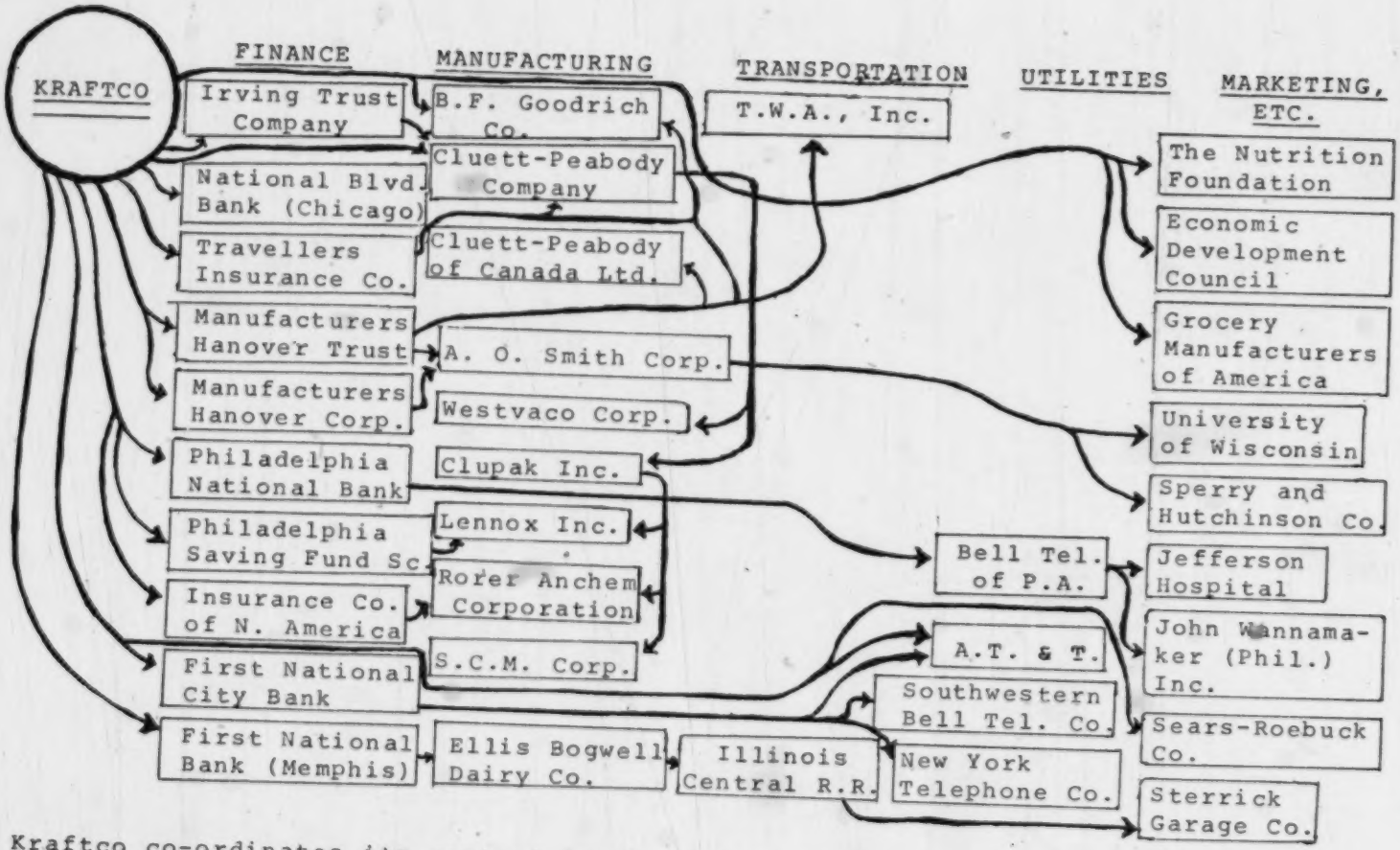
APPENDIX C

NATIONAL FARMERS UNION BOYCOTT LITERATURE

Kraftco

Kraftco extends throughout the world:

Alimentos Kraft De Venezuela
  Inversiones Kraft C.A. (Venezuela)
Dowdall, O'Mahoney & Co. (Mfg.) Ltd. (Ireland)
Kraft Foods (Pty.) Ltd. (South Africa)
Vancouver Fancy Sausage Co. Ltd. - Canada
Kraft Foods A/S - Denmark
Kraft Foods Ltd. - Canada
  Darifarm Foods Ltd. - Canada
Kraft Foods De Mexico & S.A. C.V.
Kraft Foods Svenska A.B. - Sweden
Kraft Foods Inc. - Phillipines
Kraft Foods S.A. - Panama
Kraft Foods Ltd. - England
  Brains (Food Products) Ltd. - England
Mitcham Foods Ltd. - England
Kraft S.P.A. - Italy
Kraft Holdings Ltd. - Australia
  Kraft Foods Ltd. - Australia
  Fred Walker & Com. Pty. - Australia
Sungold Dairies Pty. Ltd. - Australia
Kraft G.M.B.H. - Germany
  Erste Deutsche Knaeckbrotwerke G.M.B.H.
  Herzjunge-Kaesewerk G.M.B.H. - Germany
Dominion Dairies Ltd. - Canada (83.6%)
  Purity Dairies Ltd. - Canada
Kraft Foods Ltd. Y Compania Ltda. - Guatemala
Kraft-Leonesas S.A. - Spain (85.5%)
Fromagie Franco-Suisse "Le Ski" S.A. - Belgium
M.K. Cheese Co. - Japan (50%)
Sealtest Foods Division - Canada.



Kraftco co-ordinates its control in the corporate world via directorate connections with other monopolies.

TABLE VI. KRAFTCO IN THE CORPORATE WORLD - NATIONAL FARMERS UNION BOYCOTT

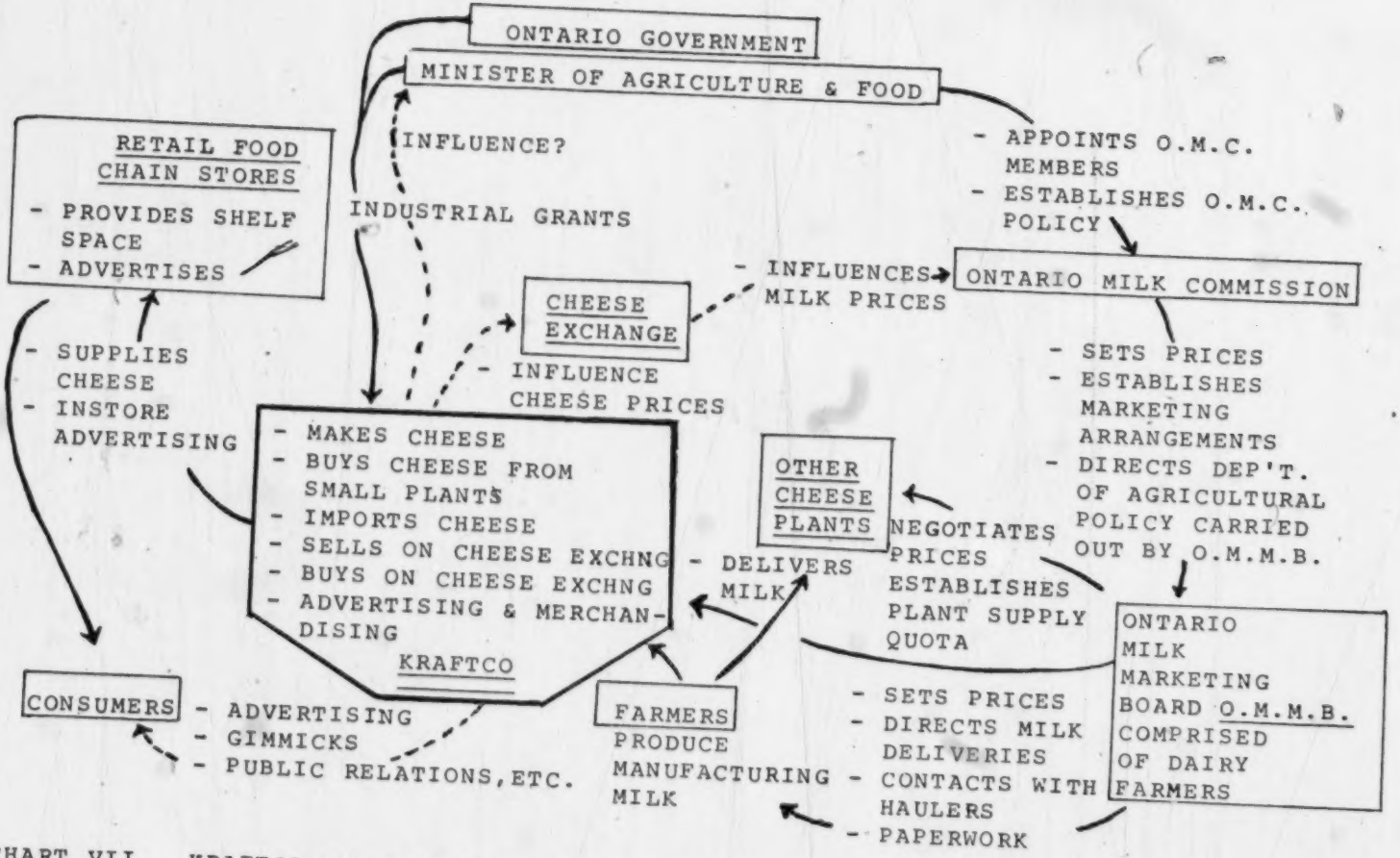


CHART VII. KRAFTCO AND THE GOVERNMENT - NATIONAL FARMERS UNION BOYCOTT LITERATURE